

Feng Yu Jiu Tian Volume 7

(A Prestigious King's Mighty Strength)

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Chapter 1

The scene of the battlefield suddenly appeared to dramatically changed, not only did Rong Tian dare to easily send a secret coded message within the vicinity of Dong Fan, the most impressive is having Empress Dowager who had hidden within the inner palace comfortably transformed and disguised herself as the Great Master “Sun Zi” with vast knowledge. Although Feng Ming believed that he had trained himself very well mentally ever since arriving to this ancient period, he couldn’t keep his heart from thumping heavily.

Acting out an emotional touching scene between a teacher and a disciple that is so realistic, he could earn an Oscar award.

LD: The Art of War that Master Sun had presented is very astounding. Here, please have a taste of Dong Fan’s excellent tea, and then we will continue listening to your military strategies.

ED: Good. Good. Advisor seems very interested in military strategies, comparing to my disciple who is not willing to improve, you’re a much faster learner.

All of those so called military strategies of hers were taught by Rong Tian who learned it by Feng Ming. After understanding it, because of the urgent change of events, he had to teach it to her. Because Feng Ming was being held hostage, he was forced against his will to reveal a bit of the military strategies, so comparing to Empress Dowager who was taught meticulously by Rong Tian, would seem to have more knowledge.

But that knowledge also has its limits, Lu Dan is not an easy opponent to trick if he continues to ask “Sun Zi” about related military strategies again, and Empress Dowager wouldn’t be able to counter.

LD: I heard Duke Ming said, Master Sun has two different sets of military strategies, one is the “Art of War”, where Duke Ming had used the chained boat fire strategy at Aman River. The other one is “The Exclusive Art of War” which is even more amazing than the first.

Feng Ming was drinking tea and if he wasn’t looking down at that moment, he could have spit his tea onto his “master.”

Empress Dowager was also surprised. She only learned the Art of War from Rong Tian and wasn't quite familiar with it yet, so where did this other Exclusive Art of War came from? She turned around to glance over at Feng Ming.

Feng Ming was quick witted and immediately stood in front of Empress Dowager, he kneel down and said.

FM: Your disciple is bad; I didn't listen to your words and carelessly told Advisor about the other military strategy book that you written.

The inner palace is usually the place where people trick and we lie, talking about acting, Empress Dowager's acting ability compared to Feng Ming was never any lowered. She immediately shook her head.

ED: Feng Ming, when you went down the mountains, didn't you listen carefully to what I have told you?

FM: You have said: "The Exclusive Art of War" compare to the "Art of War" is extremely more powerful. Looking at the level of military strategy from the present kingdoms, using "Art of War" is already enough. At this point, it's not necessary to use "The Exclusive Art of War"; you have to wait in the future when the all the kingdoms' military strategies have improve immensely in order to let others know about it.

ED: And you still dare to reveal it? (She pound hard onto the arm of the chair, Lu Dan laughed)

LD: Please Master Sun, don't blame Duke Ming. It's because Lu Dan was not good. We were discussing about military strategies and during the point of interest, Duke Ming was careless about it...

While talking for a bit, a servant of Lu Dan lifted the curtains and walked in, "Reporting to Advisor..."

LD: Who told you to come in? Didn't I tell everyone to leave so that no one can bother my conversation with Master Sun and Duke Ming?

"Advisor, please forgive, the military division has urgent matter, Jun Qing wanted to intervene."

The voice of Jun Qing traveled inside, his footsteps approached nearer. Not long, the curtains were lifted and Jun Qing's image appeared along with his other tall and strong generals standing behind him.

Lu Dan's face was a bit pale, but it completely changed when he stood up with a smile of his face.

LD: Jun Ling Si personally came to this place, Lu Dan is very honored. Jun Ling Si had came at the right time, Master Sun who is well-versed in the Art of War is here discussing about military strategies, Jun Ling Si is also familiar with military strategies, would you like to join the discussion? Someone, bring the tea.

JQ: No need. Jun Qing's reason for coming here is very simple, I would like to request Master Sun to decipher this strange message we have retrieved on a body of a spy from Bei Qi.

"A message?"

JQ: According to Duke Ming, he stated that those who can read it are very few, and Master Sun is one of those few people.

Jun Qing turned towards Empress Dowager and glanced at her, seeing that she was a female, he felt very surprised.

JQ: Don't know if Master Sun is happy to help and come over to the military meeting hall for a bit?

LD: According to Jun Ling Si, what message is it?

Jun Qing glanced over at Lu Dan; his face was serious without much expression.

JQ: Please forgive me Advisor, this is confidential matter related to the military division, only those with high position in the military forces can participate.

The beautiful face of Lu Dan suddenly reddened; his eyes were filled with evil anger but immediately disappeared. Even though he is filled with intelligence, holding power within Dong Fan's inner palace, overthrowing the priestesses, but towards military matter, he cannot place his hands in it. The military division in Dong Fan is extremely loyal to the King with great respect towards one's background and connection, Lu Dan was born from a common family, and never stepped foot on the battlefield, so it's natural that he won't receive approval from the generals within the military forces.

Also, even if Lu Dan had Dong Fan King's trust and love, he still cannot easily stand in their way. This is the main reason why Lu Dan decided to take advantage of Feng Ming and "The Art of War." Feng Ming and that book can help Lu Dan receive power within the military division, something that he yearns for.

Jun Qing patiently waited for Empress Dowager's answer. Feng Ming's palms were filled with sweat. He had carelessly stated that the message, "Sun Zi" could understand it and never would have thought a hundred times that "Sun Zi" would actually appear.

Well, isn't it great, now they have caught him red-handed.

If Empress Dowager took a look at the message and couldn't explain it, then that means Feng Ming was lying, and Jun Qing might use this excuse to behead him. If she can explain it, then what kind of "news the gods would send to the mortals"?

"I am near you, wait for me."

Thinking about the message Rong Tian sent, he felt happy and in a slight moment, he almost formed a smile on his face. Feng Ming quickly clenched his teeth and lowered his head, what the heck was he doing? Thinking about that at that moment was a bit unnecessary.

"Master Sun, please." One of Jun Qing's men lifted the curtains.

Empress Dowager was not clear about the whole story, but seeing Feng Ming's face, how can she easily leave with someone else. She lightly pushed the tea cup and didn't say a single word.

JQ: (walked forward a few steps) Master Sun, the time is urgent, please come.

Lu Dan was angry at Jun Qing's rudeness, seeing the way "Master Sun" ignored Jun Qing, it could be said that she kind of help him, so he smiled coldly and said.

LD: Jun Ling Si, Master Sun is a special guest that I have invited; she is not one of your subordinate. Whether Master Sun wants to go to the military meeting hall or not, it would be best for her to decide.

Jun Qing paused a bit, but he wasn't angry. He looked over at Feng Ming.

JQ: Duke Ming also knows how urgent this matter is, request Duke Ming to persuade your Master to come this once, in order to avoid disappointing the trust of the Great King towards Duke Ming.

Just like that, Feng Ming couldn't just cross his arms and stand there. He softly spoke to Empress Dowager.

FM: Master, Jun Ling Si received a message/letter from a Bei Qi spy, the message on it had a similar writing to what master had talked about how the Gods communicate with the mortals. I was bold enough to tell Jun Ling Si that master could read this type of writing. Jun Ling Si wishes very much to decipher the meaning within it and wishes you to take this trip, don't know what your decision is?

ED: So that's it. You've continued to get involved.

FM: Yes, yes. Your disciple has been rash.

ED: This matter... (She looked over at Lu Dan) What does Advisor think?

Lu Dan saw that "Master Sun" asked for his opinion, giving him some respect, so his mood lightened up a bit. However, he was understanding, of course he wouldn't say the words: "Master, you should not go."

LD: Lu Dan will respect any decision that Master Sun makes.

Empress Dowager pretended to think it over for a bit and then replied to Jun Qing.

ED: I won't lie to Jun Ling Si. I have decided long ago that I won't meddle into court affairs anymore, however, my disciple Feng Ming revealed everything, and made Jun Ling Si personally come here to ask. In order to repay Advisor's hospitality, I felt it's only right to do something for Dong Fan. Alright, I will help Jun Ling Si with this matter, but...I'm old and can't easily move around freely and would rather if Jun Ling Si asks right here related to your military division. Please forgive me for not being able to take the trip.

In the beginning, Jun Qing had no intention of discussing the matter in front of Lu Dan, but since "Master Sun" didn't want to follow him to the meeting hall, he didn't want to delay the urgent matter so he pulled out the letter and handed it to "Master Sun."

Empress Dowager took the letter and opened it up.

ED: Ha? The writing in this letter is really what the Gods have used, where did you find it?

JQ: We got it from a spy that we've caught. Master, we would like to request if you can decipher the hidden message?

Feng Ming was like an ant crawling on a hot wok.

Empress Dowager, you must definitely come up with a good lie to trick Lu Dan and Jun Qing, even if it's not easy.

Empress Dowager was not a bit hesitant, holding the letter and looking from left to right, her mouth mumbled some words, closed her eyes and lost in thoughts. After everyone around was waiting with tired necks for her translation, she wrinkled her brows and looked over at Jun Qing.

ED: I also don't know what the hidden message is.

FM: What?

JQ: What? (shocked and disappointed with a bit of suspicion)

Empress Dowager placed the letter on the table and slowly said.

ED: It's because this letter is not complete. The writing of the Gods compared with regular writing is complicated a thousand times. If the letter is not complete, how can I translate the

hidden message inside? It's just like a military map with only one piece of it, so how can we know where the beginning is?

Feng Ming's two eyes widened, he wanted so badly to just kiss Empress Dowager, using this excuse was very ingenious!

The older they are the wiser they are.

JQ: What Master said is that this letter has another part to it?

ED: Absolutely correct.

JQ: How is this possible?

ED: How can it not be possible? (looked towards Lu Dan) Right now, 11 kingdoms are at war, every kingdom wants to use all sort of method to protect their confidential information. The method of separating the message into different pieces to different people, Advisor must have heard of it before?

LD: That's right. Everyone different will hold a piece, and then handed altogether to receiver, and the receiver will place them together to form one piece. By doing so, they won't have to worry if one of the people is caught and the secret is reveal.

This type of sending message, Jun Qing has also heard of.

Unfortunately, Bei Qi is their dangerous neighboring kingdom of Dong Fan and have been making continuous movements, causing generals of Jun Qing to be anxious, and now they discovered a spy, afraid that a spy had infiltrated their troops and this mysterious letter made all of them anxious to know everything.

Jun Qing already had his suspicion about Feng Ming, but he couldn't guess why Feng Ming would want to lie to him. If "Master Sun" were to state the hidden message, then he could figure out whether it was true or not. He just can't believe she would pull out an excuse that the message was not complete.

FM: Jun Ling Si, I believe that if we want to find out the hidden message behind this letter, we will need to capture another spy.

JQ: I've already made the order to strictly follow anyone new/strange that had recently appeared in the troops. Since it's like that, I have other important matter to take care of, I'll excuse myself first.

He brought all of his subordinates outside of the room and a bit later went back and spoke with Feng Ming.

JQ: Jun Ting stated that within the next ten days, Duke Ming planned on not coming to see the soldiers practice and need to stay inside the inner palace to write military training methods?

FM: That's right.

JQ: That cannot be done. Duke Ming had already forgotten one thing, the troops from both our parties will battle once every month. Using ten days to write training methods, then when will you get the time to actually train them? Duke Ming needs to use three days time to write the training manual. I already gave Jun Ting the order that during these three days, she will assist Duke Ming inside the inner palace. She is still young with less experience, please look after her Duke Ming.

Not allowing Feng Ming to refuse, bowed to Lu Dan, and walked out with everyone.

Feng Ming silently whimpered, it seems like Jun Qing really want to use his daughter to stick to him like glue.

Empress Dowager was a bit tired and looked over at Lu Dan.

ED: My bones and body is old, unable to withstand suffering. On the road coming here, I've been tossed about, even now I still feel as if I'm still sitting in the palanquin.

LD: It's Lu Dan's miscalculation. Master had come from afar, so you will need to rest peacefully for once. It's just in time, I also have a few matter to take care of. For the evening banquet tonight, I would like to invite Master to have fun as well, how about it?

ED: (shook her head) I'm from the mountains, I don't like to be around crowds like that...

LD: It's only natural. If Master does not like it, then you don't need to come. Then Lu Dan will wait until Master is well rested and will come by to request for your guidance.

FM: Master come and sleep over at my place, allow your disciple to take good care of you.

Empress Dowager looked over at Lu Dan, Lu Dan nodded his head.

LD: I'll bother Duke Ming then, I'll send a few more attendants over to serve you.

Lu Dan personally escorted them to main entrance, calling his close servants to escort the two of them to where Feng Ming is currently staying at.

Feng Ming tried to hold back his excitement when returning to his place, told the servants to excuse them and closed the door. Still afraid that others might hear them, Feng Ming lowered his voice and whispered to Empress Dowager.

FM: How's it going?

ED: What is Duke Ming trying to ask?

FM: Your Highness...(he stomped his foot) Of course it's about him.

Empress Dowager saw Feng Ming's action and couldn't help but laugh.

ED: Come closer.

Feng Ming obediently leaned his ear.

ED: He's sick.

FM: Sick? (let out a frightened sound. Looking at all four directions and then lowered his voice) Why...why is he sick? Sick from what? Then why did he say that he is near me? And want me to wait for him?

ED: He's lovesick and it's very serious.

Feng Ming wanted to ask some more, but Empress Dowager suddenly said: "Don't say anymore."

ED: The Great King knows that after Duke Ming sees me, you will ask a lot of questions. All these questions, to explain all of them are very complicated, so let's wait until The Great King explains it all to Duke Ming later. At the moment, Duke Ming just needs to patiently wait for the Great King's news, he has come up with a great plan to capture Dong Fan. Duke Ming just needs to wait.

FM: Then what truly happened to Xi Lei? It's stated here that Tong Er had stolen the throne, what happened?

ED: It'll be explained later.

FM: What kind of great plan did he come up with?

ED: Don't ask.

FM: I am in a dangerous situation, how can I be at peace without asking?

ED: If he doesn't want you to know, then he has his own reasons. Does Duke Ming not believe the Great King?

FM: ...How can I not?

ED: As long as you believe the Great King then it's fine. This place has a lot of people following close by, if they noticed us whispering, they will raise suspicion. From this point forward, just think of me as your master, don't ask any questions.

That's right, believe in him. Just need to believe in him.

The army of Dong Fan cannot stop the sword in your hands, I will believe you.

That night, Feng Ming had a dream of Rong Tian coming back from court meetings and heading to the Crown Prince's quarter.

FM: Rong Tian, I want to go horseback riding! I want to eat dumplings! I want you to hug me! I'm tired, let me rest in your arms!... This time I'm on top!

RT: No!

Suddenly, Rong Tian's face changed into Ruo Yan.

FM: No! It can't be!

Lu Dan appeared behind him and laughed.

LD: Of course it can't be, Duke Ming belongs to my Great King.

Feng Ming stared at the person in front of his eyes and it was no longer Ruo Yan, but now changed to Dong Fan King.

FM: I don't want this! I don't want this! Rong Tian hurry! Come!

"Duke Ming? Wake up Duke Ming?"

Having someone shake his shoulder, Feng Ming suddenly opened his eyes, his forehead filled with sweat.

A female attendant patted her chest: "I've finally able to wake Duke Ming, Duke Ming was having a nightmare and screaming out loud."

FM: Luckily, it was just a dream. Have I waken you up? I'm sorry. I'm alright now, you can go back to sleep.

"Sleep? Your servant is here to help Duke Ming change clothes. Duke Ming should wake up."

FM: This early? It' cold, I have to sleep some more, please don't bother me.

"But...13th Lieutenant has come, she is currently waiting for you in the main hall. She states that she needs to assist Duke Ming in writing something."

FM: Tell her I'm sick and need to sleep until the afternoon.

"This ..."

FM: Go, go.

This is the territory of Duke Ming, and if it wasn't his, it was still Lu Dan's territory, how can 13th Captain dare to bother his beautiful sleep?

To leave his bed during the winter morning is something Feng Ming hates the most, so his servant left the room. This time he wanted a beautiful dream and didn't want Ruo Yan, Dong Fan King or Lu Dan to ruin it.

However, his blanket was suddenly pulled away, causing Feng Ming's whole body to shiver and yelled out in a weird way that he jump straight up from his bed.

FM: Who? (Feng Ming was mad)

The person that rudely busted in was standing at the head of the bed and throwing his blanket down on the cold ground.

FM: What do you want? (Feng Ming wore light clothing, his two hands were covering his chest and shaking.)

JT: Request Duke Ming to immediately leave the bed. My father wants me to use these three days to follow Duke Ming and discuss about methods of training troops, not to watch Duke Ming sleep.

FM: Not allowing someone to sleep is serious abuse, I will go to the Great King's place and report to him that you're torturing me!

JT: Oh really...Duke Ming just recently shouted out the enemy ruler Rong Tian in your dream, does this also need to be reported to the Great King?

FM: You!

JT: This responsibility I received from my father, not just investigating Duke Ming's ability, but also the loyalty of Duke Ming towards Dong Fan. If there are any traces of the past Duke Ming in the present you...

FM: Alright, alright. I'll leave my bed.

Feng Ming knew that arguing would be useless.

Jun Ting turned around and lifted the curtains: "One incense time, Jun Ting will wait in the study hall of this quarter."

CHAPTER 2

Feng Ming's servants helped dress him and brought some dumplings along with congee for him to eat, telling him that it might be until the late afternoon that he could get some rest judging by the way 13th Captain deals with work. Feng Ming was dreading about what he has to deal with later, but made sure that he fully ate.

While walking pass the guest room, Feng Ming looked up and saw a familiar figure walking towards him. Feng Ming was about to call out "Empress Dowager" but stopped himself early and asked her why she is up early in this cold weather.

ED: The snow scenery is very beautiful so how can I ignore it. You are also up very early.

FM: Your disciple's fate is very hard, I have to examine different training method with 13th Captain. Ah, 13th Captain is Jun Ting, also the daughter of Jun Ling Si, the person you saw yesterday. I have to go to the study hall right now.

ED: I want to go to the back courtyard, which is also along the way.

While walking to the study hall, Feng Ming noticed that everywhere they went there were attendants and guards around them so it was hard to say anything out of the ordinary. If they were to whisper, it would only lead to more suspicion. Feng Ming was wondering what Empress Dowager wanted to talk to him about. When they reached the middle of the path to the study hall and back courtyard, Empress Dowager suddenly lowered her voice.

ED: Although these recent years, your learning/efforts has improved, but I am still a bit disappointed.

FM: What? (Feng Ming innocently raised his head) Right, right, your disciple haven't improved, request master for your guidance.

ED: You are already not young so I don't want to keep lecturing you. It's just yesterday, I saw that you went to sleep early and seem to have forgotten what I have taught you, which is to have the habit of reflecting your daily actions every night. It appears that young people who are as studious and diligent like Advisor are less and less nowadays, I feel it's a pity that I was thinking of accepting another disciple.

FM: Master wants to accept new disciple?

ED: That's right. The Art of War, I have fully taught you everything, however, "The Exclusive Art of War" you don't have the ability and qualifications to learn the essence of it. Although I am someone who has gone through much practice/cultivation, I am not an immortal, and eventually there will be a day I'll pass away. Finding someone with sufficient qualification and ability, teaching him/her the Exclusive Art of War is my greatest wish, and is also the main purpose why I have came down the mountains. Dong Fan is a kingdom who worships the gods, therefore among their people there must be many who have achieved

intelligence/enlightenment bestowed by the Gods. I believe that at this place I can find my second disciple. Ming Er, is there anyone who is the best candidate?

FM: The candidates...

ED: I feel that Advisor Lu Dan is very intelligent and spiritual and is a very good candidate. But the Art of War relies on someone with strong merits, which it seems the person who has the most experience on the battlefield to inherit the Exclusive Art of War is better suited. Jun Ling Si from yesterday is also not a bad choice, however, it's a pity that he is at an old age...

Feng Ming was standing there with his mouth wide opened.

Heavens, this respected fake Sun Zi, you sure let out a huge bait. Yesterday, he just mentioned to her about the existence of the Exclusive Art of War and the next day, she takes advantage of it to the extreme. All four corners surrounding them within the inner palace are filled with spies. Within one hour, 80% possibility, all of the things they talked about will eventually reach Lu Dan and Jun Ling Si's ears.

At the moment, Dong Fan already had a battle over who take over the assistant position between Jun Ling Si and Feng Ming, and now there is going to be another "battle over who will inherit the Exclusive Art of War."

Does this lady really want to make Dong Fan, within a month, have a tense internal political battle be stirred around like a pot of rice? No wonder she is the mother of Rong Tian.

Feng Ming suddenly remembered he had an appointment meeting with Jun Ting and tried to excuse himself.

FM: Master, you can go and enjoy the snow scenery, your disciple has an appointment with Jun Ting in the study hall. If I don't leave, she might cause a rampage. The military army of Dong Fan would punish someone by whipping him, it's very scary, scary indeed.

ED: My dear disciple, you need to remember. You have to send someone to thank Advisor Lu Dan. Advisor had sent someone to invite me to the inner palace of Dong Fan, served me with great care, and yesterday was planning on coming by at night to discuss about military strategies. Someone who is studious like that deserves many praises.

Feng Ming suddenly realizes why Empress Dowager wanted to talk to him. It seems like something happened to Lu Dan last night since he didn't come by to talk with "Sun Zi" about the military strategies and judging by Lu Dan's personality and interest, he would never let go of that opportunity.

If so, yesterday night, did something major happened? Feng Ming now understands why Empress Dowager didn't sleep last night and had to stop him midway.

Empress Dowager tells him to hurry off to the study hall, which Feng Ming ran off. When reaching the study hall, he didn't walk in at first because he didn't know how Jun Ting's mood would be after having to wait for awhile so he rested against the window and peer through a small opening.

Inside the study hall, Feng Ming witnessed a scene with Jun Ting and another male soldier named Lin Yin.

LY: Be careful with the ink and staining your military clothes, look...

JT: Let go.

LY: Let me help you clean it up.

JT: No need, let go.

Feng Ming noticed that Lin Yin was holding onto Jun Ting's hand and won't let go.

JT: Lin Yin, I told you to let go, you dare to not listen?

LY: Ting Er, I...

JT: Don't call me that! I already told you, don't call me that. Let me go.

Feng Ming thought to himself that he can't believe a person like Lin Yin would dare to chase after a female tiger like Jun Ting.

If it was Lu Dan or Rong Tian who had witness this, their first thought would be how to take advantage of this budding romance that no one has discovered to blackmail.

Lin Yin still had his back towards Feng Ming. No matter how much Jun Ting shouted out, he still wouldn't let go of her hand.

LY: What would happen if you keep on shouting for the guards to come and then I'll be executed by Jun Ling Si?

JT: (was shocked and a bit later said) My hands are familiar with holding swords, it's rough and ugly, what's so good?

LY: I just had a slipped of words, why are you still angry like this..

Jun Ting pulled her hands back and clenched her teeth.

JT: How funny, I am a Captain, why would I hold a grudge with my subordinate? This matter today, since it's you...

LY: I know, I'm not compatible with you.

Jun Ting turned away.

Lin Yin looked at her for awhile and then finally said.

LY: Since it's like this, I request to be transfer to the 12th army.

JT: Why? (Jun Ting was a bit shocked and turned around to look at Lin Yin)

LY: Your subordinate wishes to follow the 12th captain.

JT: No!

LY: 13th Captain does not have the right to disapprove. I am a Lieutenant and have the right to directly speak to Jun Ling Si about this. Also, you don't want to see me, finding another Lieutenant who is pleasing to the eyes would be better.

JT: Who said that I don't want to see you?

As for Feng Ming standing outside, he thought: okay, now obediently exchanging romantic glances. If he knew this would happened, he would have slept in some more, with the situation like this, if he came by in the evening, Jun Ting probably would not be a tad bit angry.

If the situation like this was Rong Tian and Feng Ming, they would be having more sweet bickering, limbs entwining and performing strenuous physical exercise.

However, it seems that this Lin Yin is a terribly foolish guy, no where compared to Rong Tian. Seeing Jun Ting acting spoiled, he not only will not hit the snake with a stick, but just stood there stunned for awhile, watching her and said: "I'm not compatible with you, I've anger you, why stay in the 13th army. The other Lieutenant are better than me. The duties that I take care of other people can also have the ability to do them..."

Jun Ting was so angry, she gave Lin Yin a slapped on the face.

JT: What nonsense...Stand in the snow for me and carefully reflect for a bit.

Jun Ting pointed her finger towards the door of the study hall.

Lin Yin turned around and walked towards the door.

JT: Stop! (she paused a bit and then said) Why are you going?

Lin Yin didn't answer and lifted the curtains to walk out.

Feng Ming ran from behind the study hall and made his way around just in time to see Lin Yin.

FM: Mister, has 13th Captain been waiting a long time inside the room? I already quickly left the bed, dress up, and eat to arrive here, but I met my master along the way, hehe, it's the person that yesterday Jun Ling Si personally came to the Great King's quarters to request for her audience about the secret message found on the spy's body....

Lin Yin placed his hand out to stop the forever never ending words of Feng Ming.

LY: 13th Captain has been waiting for Duke Ming for a long time, request that Duke Ming hurry up and enter.

Awhile ago, Feng Ming only saw Lin Yin's back and now that he's face to face, he discovered that this soldier was filled with a courageous aura to chase after Jun Ting, not the same any regular generals. Lin Yin has a certain naivety of a student, behind the façade laid a hidden melancholic feel, as if there is a lingering feeling, maybe this rare hazy aura among the army people is something that Jun Ting felt special about him.

LY: Captain does not like people who waste time. Duke Ming will need to arrive early next time.

Feng Ming lifted the curtains and walked inside the study hall. He saw the unpleasing face of Jun Ting standing in front of the desk with crossed arms, giving a punitive look as if to send punishment.

JT: Does Duke Ming know the punishment for arriving late to a military meeting?

FM: I'm sorry, it's because...

JT: You don't need to explain to me! Every excuse is useless. Even though you are someone who the Great King gives permission to participate the military meeting, you cannot look down upon military regulations.

Feng Ming felt a bit upset that Jun Ting decided to pour all her anger out on him after she had an argument with her boyfriend. But of course, he couldn't tell her straight out like that.

FM: 13th Captain, please ease your anger, I admit that I did arrive late a bit, but that's because...

JT: Enough...Duke Ming does not need to explain anymore. It's still better to begin writing the military training methods.

Feng Ming was still standing at one place, Jun Ting push the ink block forward: "Duke Ming?"

FM: Ah, I'll write it down right away.

Feng Ming begins writing some pages and then Jun Ting questions him about certain things that she didn't understand.

JT: The things that Feng Ming wrote, it doesn't seem to training methods. Also, when in battle, there's no order for the Generals to bring the soldiers to defeat the enemies, but to have the Generals follow the main commander, why is that?

FM: You're the Captain in charge of the 13th army, is it true that the training of every soldiers is your responsibility?

JT: Of course, I can't handle it, my subordinates are a total of 3000 soldiers, and how can I follow and train each one of them? It's better to train as a group, one person in charge of one group, which is 50 soldiers.

FM: Well, that's right. Bringing out the best of each soldier will make Dong Fan's military force become powerful. In order to bring out the best of each soldier, you need to have the best chosen Generals, and start training from each level. The soldiers of Dong Fan are numerous; to train the army to be the best is not an easy task. I have a method that can help each general to train the soldiers efficiently...When in battle; the generals follow next to the main commander, from afar, examine the event of the battlefield. If during the battle, there is a soldier that ran off, investigate clearly who is the general in charge of that soldier. Afterwards, execute that general. Just like that, the regular generals will be motivated to train their soldiers to protect their lives. As a result, the training for each army division will improve tremendously.

JT: Thinking about carefully, it does make sense. However, I still think that Duke Ming will need to write a whole book of training methods. If it's something simple like this, I'm afraid that you won't pass my father's test.

FM: You're wrong. I wanted to write a second method, which is to not have so many different training methods for it will only hinder the generals' ability and effort in the training... When we talk about teaching, the most important thing is to teach according to one's talent. The soldiers are people, they all have their good points and flaws, and they came from different places. Because their backgrounds are different, some can climb trees, some are good on water. There's too many strict regulations, those that you call training, better yet to request each of the generals to base on the ability of their soldiers to improve the training....

Feng Ming ends up explaining to Jun Ting and giving her a long lecture about training soldiers according to their ability and talents. Later there was a gust of wind that opened up the windows and they noticed that snow was falling down heavily.

Jun Ting excused herself, telling Feng Ming that she is leaving for a bit will return soon. Feng Ming yelled out to her that he still haven't finished and didn't hear about her thoughts yet, but she just left.

Feng Ming inside the room by himself so he started talking to himself.

FM: Looking at her expression, it seems like she wasn't enjoying my lecture. In fact, I'm not really some sort of god, I can't know everything by heart, discussing about ancient period training method has nothing to do with me. If I knew this before, then that year I should have lessen my time reading (porn magazine) and read more (political science) magazines.

At that moment, the curtains lifted and Jun Ting returned along with Lin Yin who apparently stood in the snow just as he was told to. Because of how caring Jun Ting is about her "lover's" condition, Feng Ming also thought about Rong Tian and how he would rather be frozen then to allow Feng Ming to sneeze one bit. Rong Tian would always hug him to prevent him from getting a cold.

Feng Ming slightly giggled a bit at the pair, in which Jun Ting asked him what he's laughing about. Feng Ming decided to divert and said that he was thinking about the snow scenery and saying something about how the Advisor must have invited his master to enjoy the scenery as well.

Feng Ming brought up the topic about Lu Dan just to take notice of Jun Ting's reaction. Jun Ting tells Feng Ming to think more about himself and Feng Ming asked her what she means by that.

JT: Duke Ming is being taken advantage of by the Advisor, being dragged into the battle for the assistant position between my father...Right now, the Advisor the strong pillar for Duke Ming to rely on, but the military division, does not have the ability to welcome Duke Ming into it. This important time right now, if something were to happen to the Advisor, how will Duke Ming take care of himself? Why don't Duke Ming think about yourself some more?

FM: What you mean, if something were to happen to the Advisor that is beyond expected? If something were to happen to the Advisor, how will the military division answer to the Great King?

JT: (shook her head and sighed) Duke Ming has misunderstood. We are not planning on getting rid of the Advisor, he is still the root of Dong Fan and the most trusted person beside the Great King. But according to the latest news we've got, the Advisor's health is deteriorating, especially since the beginning of this winter, the palace physicians are usually lingering around the Advisor's quarters.

Feng Ming's heart beat faster.

In fact, Lu Dan's sickness has become worse. This is also the reason why he wasn't able to visit last night. Rong Tian had said before, this type of sickness is due to a long term of straining one's mind, if it doesn't exacerbate then it's fine, but once it's exacerbated then afraid that he won't be able to pass the winter, as there are almost no cure.

JT: Even though I haven't been with Duke Ming for a long time, but I still feel that Duke Ming is not a bad person. The priestesses have been defeated, and the Advisor held sole power in hand, standing in the back and not worrying about putting Duke Ming in harm's way. This made it clear that he wishes for Duke Ming to replace his position in the courts of Dong Fan. But with pressure and struggle by the court officials, it would be hard to make Dong Fan a powerful kingdom. Dong Fan is already a mess as it is, there is no need for another scene of cruelty and bloodshed, internal struggle is not what the military division wishes for. If Duke Ming is willing to be neutral, we will not make it difficult for Duke Ming anymore.

LY: Those are the thoughts of Jun Ling Si.

JT: I have honestly told Duke Ming everything, can you give me a definite answer?

Feng Ming was silent, he had mixed feelings and millions of thoughts flooded his mind.

Needless to say, people in the military must have noticed that something was wrong with Lu Dan and speculated that he must have serious illness. Feng Ming felt ashamed as Lu Dan had clearly told him about it and just not he finally remembers this...

It can be said that Jun Qing's approach can be described as good intentions. They just don't want Dong Fan state of affairs to fall into the hands of another traitor, which is to not having unanimity. To have all the forces in Dong Fan unite in harmony and maintain a combine national strength.

[Most of this got a bit confusing, but overall I believe the military division doesn't want Duke Ming to be the same as Lu Dan, to dominate the political affairs, but this is what Lu Dan had in mind if Feng Ming replace him]

LY: When the time comes, Duke Ming should know what decision to make.

JT: I don't want to force Duke Ming in giving me an answer, but I hope Duke Ming is clear about the situation. I request that you do not do anything careless as to disrupt the Dong Fan's Bureau which is trying to move forward towards stabilizing harmony.

Feng Ming sighed heavily; he could not tell Jun Ting that he already reached an agreement with Lu Dan earlier. Also that fact that he wore the unparallel sword on his body and if he didn't listen to Lu Dan, Lu Dan could easily give the other pair of sword to an unimportant person, kill him and indirectly Feng Ming would die too. Though he wasn't sure if this rumor about the sword was true, but if it was true, then what would he do?

The important thing is that he is also not Duke Ming of Dong Fan, Rong Tian the person whom he love I hiding somewhere unknown, and hopes that he could disrupt the peace of Dong Fan a bit. That's right, if Dong Fan I stabilized, why do they still need to imprison Feng Ming?

FM: I understand now, Lieutenant Lin Yin is responsible for military secrets, no wonder he is covered in frost/snow upon coming back, and 13th Captain immediately presented the physical condition of the Advisor.

Lin Yin and Jun Ting's face slightly changed; apparently they did not think that Feng Ming deduction skills were impressive.

LY: That's right, I'm in charge of gathering information inside the palace.

Lin Yin just met with a spy who served for Lu Dan to confirm Lu Dan's illness.

JT: Duke Ming can inform this to the Advisor whenever you feel like, but the Advisor is also very clear about this within the palace. In the palace, everywhere has spies. Not to mention, Lin Yin is also a subordinate under my care, I believe the Advisor would not dare to touch him as he like.

Feng Ming at this point realized that Lin Yin was not ordinary; no wonder he has the guts to pursue Jun Ting. He looks simple on the surface but is very impressive underneath. One end he is angrily quarreling and the next minute he calmly go investigate, a first class spy.

At that moment, Chang Yen came to inform them that they need to rush over the military meeting hall for they just caught another Bei Qi's spy and again had a secret message on him.

Feng Ming was shocked, but he wondered what kind of message Rong Tian sent this time.

CHAPTER 3

Chang Yen requested Duke Ming to persuade his master "Sun Zi" to come to the military meeting to help with the message deciphering. Empress Dowager agreed to come over there, Jun Ling Si even prepared a palanquin for her and a horse for Duke Ming so they won't have to travel by foot to the meeting hall.

Jun Qing sat in the middle main focus point, Empress Dowager was placed at a comfortable spot, Jun Ting stood behind her father, and Lin Yin sat a spot that seem to hold a significant position in the army.

They stated the spy again carried a message and committed suicide once he noticed he was caught. The message was something along the line of "Soldiers won't shed blood because 'bean' will be defeated/won?"

Feng Ming came to the conclusion that perhaps 'bean' was reference to the food supply and maybe Rong Tian is planning on getting rid of the food supply that was given to Dong Fan to pass this winter. However, he thought that this method will only make the people of Dong Fan suffered and won't have any effect on the nobles of Dong Fan. So what is Rong Tian's scheme to defeat Dong Fan and save him?

Jun Ting asked Empress Dowager if the writing in the message was the same as the last one and if perhaps she can decipher it.

Empress Dowager again tells them that the message is just the second piece of the puzzle, but not a complete one. Everyone was disappointed as well as Jun Qing, who also had a bit of suspicion.

Empress Dowager then later said that with the two message, she can somewhere put together a guess about the possible message for them.

Feng Ming thought Empress Dowager's response was very smart for by doing so, she can basically give them some sort of guess and they won't tried to double check if it correspond to every single stroke and marking of the message to prove whether or not it's true.

Empress Dowager told them that the message had something to do with Dong Fan...which is...Dong Fan will meet with a great disaster.

After Empress Dowager gave them that response, Lin Yin told her that she was sprouting nonsense and whether she is trying to trick them.

LY: I am a Lieutenant of the 13th army division, Lin Yin. I hope Master will forgive my rudeness. But the suspicion I have, I have to say it. Everyone, is this message really from the Gods who sent it to the mortals? Is this message truly just one piece of the puzzle? What is the true hidden meaning of these messages? All of us could only rely on Duke Ming and Master Sun to understand a bit of it. Base on this, what do you all think about it?

FM: According to Lieutenant Lin Yin, are you saying that my master and I band together to trick Jun Ling Si?

LY: I don't dare. It's just that Duke Ming had said that only your master can understand this type of strange message and after much effort in bringing the master here, she again said that the message is not complete and cannot translate per word. And now she says that Dong Fan will meet with disaster, it's very hard for anyone to not build up suspicion that Master Sun is deliberately trying to prevaricate.

JQ: Lin Yin, tell us what's your plan?

LY: I dare to request Duke Ming and Master Sun to give some evidence, to prove to us that these are words from the Gods.

ED: Haha...Those who lie or not, the Gods know, I don't need to face this lieutenant to prove myself. (Looking over at Jun Qing) Could it be that Jun Ling Si also has suspicion towards me?

JQ: If Master can give us some evidence then that would be the best thing.

ED: Jun Ling Si haven't heard all of my predictions. Within this message, it not only state that Dong Fan will meet with disaster, but also gave some other hints. Dong Fan's disaster, starts from the south, soldiers will be ambushed, the capital in danger...The Gods had reported, the capital of Dong Fan will meet with disaster. The ambush will take place from the south. Whether Jun Ling Si believe this or not, all the things I wanted to say, I've said them.

After finishing, Empress Dowager stood up and walked out of the main entrance.

FM: (facing Jun Qing) If Jun Ling Si suspects my master and I of deception, you can always execute us. However, before Jun Ling Si make any wrong decision, I highly recommend that you send some people to investigate in the southern city to see if there is an ambush or not.

Feng Ming glanced over at Lin Yin, pretended to be mad and then chase after Empress Dowager.

No need to ask, Empress Dowager dare to say these things must mean that Rong Tian had already told her about it.

In the southern city, whether it's a lot or a few, there must be an ambush...

CHAPTER 4

Feng Ming chased after Empress Dowager. Because he was worried that someone might be following them, he didn't dare to open his mouth and speak one word to her. The two of them didn't say anything and continued their way back to the inner palace.

Upon returning, the maids told them that the Advisor has arrived and is currently waiting for Duke Ming in the main guest room.

Feng Ming quickly went inside to see, from afar he could see Lu Dan's back and not understanding why, his heart was a bit relieved.

FM: It's snowing heavily and Advisor chose to come by at this time, are you not afraid of the cold?

Lu Dan turned around and curved his lips.

LD: A moment ago when I heard Duke Ming's heavy and rush footsteps, I thought you were angry. But now that I heard Duke Ming's voice, it seems like you are rather in a good mood.

Lu Dan wore a red robe, which reflected his white skin, making him even more beautiful.

FM: Don't say it anymore. It's all because of that military meeting hall, they suspect that my master is lying, what nonsense.

Feng Ming sat down and retold the matter again until he suddenly remembered something.

FM: My master also came back with me, how come I don't see her?

One of the attendants answered, "The Master stated that she is tired and went back to her room to rest, she request that Duke Ming entertain the Advisor."

LD: No need to bother the Master, to be honest, Lu Dan came today to meet Duke...cough cough... (He suddenly placed his hands over his mouth and cough for a scary moment, as if it was hard to breathe.)

Feng Ming frowned and came closer.

FM: Are you alright, Advisor? Somebody bring over some hot tea.

Lu Dan motioned his hand and again coughed for awhile, slowly stopped and then smiled.

LD: The day keeps getting colder.

His face flushed red, which added more beauty to his appearance.

Feng Ming held onto his hand, which felt ice cold. From afar there is not much difference, but when looking close up, Lu Dan was much thinner than before.

FM: Two days ago, you were alright, how come now...

LD: Duke Ming had taught Lu Dan one line: when sickness comes, it's like a landslide, but for it to go away, it's like peeling off raw silk from a cocoon. I have already told Duke Ming earlier, could it be that Duke Ming believed Lu Dan was lying about this? It seems like 80% I can no longer conceal [my sickness] from Jun Ling Si anymore. Lu Dan is not a good person, my death is not worth anything.

Though his words were true, he did indeed cause Feng Ming misery, but at this moment, hearing his words, Feng Ming felt as if he was stabbed. His tears almost wanted to trickle down.

FM: There are many valuable herbs within the palace, and great physicians, Advisor should not think of the worst.

LD: Seeing Duke Ming's good will, Lu Dan don't know whether to be for the Great King or to be worried for Duke Ming?

Patting Feng Ming' hands, Lu Dan lowered his voice.

LD: Don't worry, even one day with my presence inside the palace, Jun Qing will not dare to touch you. The Master...well, I can't request for her teaching today.

Lu Dan slowly stood up, his body almost fell, causing Feng Ming to exclaimed and grab hold of him and that was when he knew how weak Lu Dan was.

Lu Dan broke free from Feng Ming's support, barely standing up straight, he smiled and said.

LD: I've let Duke Ming see me as a laughingstock.

FM: Next time if Advisor need anything, just send someone over to call for me.

Lu Dan nodded his head, he looked at Feng Ming and wanted to say something, but hesitated.

FM: Didn't Advisor wanted to say something to me?

Lu Dan stared at Feng Ming for a long while and then chuckled.

LD: Duke Ming should already understand that everywhere inside and outside the palace, there are spies.

Feng Ming gave him a puzzled look.

LD: Lu Dan has one request...

FM: Please do say.

LD: The Great King has a heart of gold, loves his people, respect his teacher, devoted to the Gods, deeply endowed with wisdom...

Feng Ming in the beginning did not understand what Lu Dan was trying to say until the words "deeply endowed with wisdom," that his mind lit up and finally understood.

Apparently the words that Empress Dowager said earlier in the morning mentioning about accepting a second disciple had reached the ears of Lu Dan.

LD: Request Duke Ming to say a few good words to Master Sun on behalf of the Great King.
(Revealing a faint smile, he stepped onto a small palanquin and departed in the snow.

After escorting Lu Dan, Feng Ming returned to study hall, where he saw his half written paper on military training strategies on the desk. Jun Qing and Lu Dan are two old foxes playing with politics and in the process of fighting for power. All of those so called scientific theories are of no use if Jun Qing purposely tried to make things difficult. Even an impressive training method will be rejected.

Feng Ming was depressed and tore up the sheet of paper. He sat down and tried to reorganize his thoughts that were all jumbled up because of those two men.

Lu Dan seems to have fallen severely ill, never thought that the sickness would come so quickly. Seeing him like this, it's unknown whether how many more days he has left. This time looking back, Lu Dan was slowly becoming weak on the way from Yong Yin to here. It was because Feng Ming was simple minded and ignorant to not realize this.

As for the military division of Jun Ting, the writing of the Gods, Morse code, the prophesized upcoming catastrophic disaster compared to the book on the Twelve Kingdoms are much more complicated, Feng Ming didn't bother to think about it.

As for that message from Rong Tian, what does it really mean?

Currently angry that everywhere is filled with spies, causing him to not question Empress Dowager about it. However, knowing her, she hasn't even openly told him where Rong Tian's plans were.

Feng Ming tried hard to think for almost half the day, but he still couldn't come up with the reason why.

After yawning and hearing his stomach growl, Feng Ming suddenly remembered that he still haven't had lunch. The servant told him that Master Sun chose to eat lunch inside her room and asked Feng Ming if he wanted to eat inside his room or out in the main room.

Feng Ming chose to eat in the living/main room and that's when Chang Yen and Jun Ting came by and brought over a rabbit.

FM: General Chang Yen, how come you came here all of a sudden?

CY: After the meeting, I had some free time, so I came to see Duke Ming and Master Sun to request for a lunch together.

Chang Yen handed the rabbit to the servant.

JT: (bluntly said) My father sent us to look after the two of you. If it's true that you use unsettling lies to disrupt the military's minds, then immediate punishment is ordered without mercy.

CY: My dear 13th Captain, why are you like this? Haha, the weather is cold outside, how about we sit down and have a hot pot, wouldn't that be good?

Feng Ming had a very good impression towards this veteran general and smiled affectionately at him, not minding the attitude of Jun Ting. He ordered the servants to fetch for some dishes and chopsticks.

During the meal, Jun Ting was being a mood spoiler basically even when Feng Ming tried to offer her some wine. Feng Ming can't believe that earlier, she was all telling him to think for himself and now her attitude was the complete opposite. Chang Yen on the other hand was more open and relatively pleasant.

After three cups of wine, Chang Yen suddenly asked Feng Ming.

CY: I heard that ever since Duke Ming was little, you were raised up as a Crown Prince of Xi Lei?

FM: Ha? That's right. That year, Xi Lei was unstable and worried that someone might murder the Crown Prince so Duke Rong used his own son to replace the Crown Prince in the palace. He then took the real Crown Prince, who is the later Xi Lei King, and protected him.

CY: Haha, old Duke Rong used his own child...Hearing Duke Ming's words, it feels like you are retelling the story from a third person. Isn't Duke Rong the father of Duke Ming?

Hearing Chang Yen's words, Feng Ming felt he had an ulterior motive.

Heavens, will all of Dong Fan know that he is a drifted spirit? Could it be that before Lu Dan dies, he still wants to mess/joke around with him? And yet he just felt extremely sympathetic to Lu Dan.

FM: General Chang Yen is half correct. Ever since I was little I was brought into the inner palace, my father wholeheartedly protected the real Crown Prince, so he had never taught his real son; therefore, it's inevitable that there is alienation between father and son.

Feng Ming forced on a smile and slowly drank a cup of wine.

CY: There is one thing I don't know whether I should say it or not...

Chang Yen pondered for a long time, his face showing an expression of hesitation.

FM: If there is something, please go ahead and say it.

CY: This thing, if Rong Tian is still here, Duke Ming is still Xi Lei's minister of state, I will not mention a word, but since the situation is like this, there is no reason not to.

This time, even Jun Ting expressed a bit of curiosity. Chang Yen sighed and continued.

CY: Duke Ming, do you know that your appearance and temperament is very similar to an old friend of mine many years ago. When I first met you, I thought you were his son; therefore, upon first meeting, I had a good impression of you.

Feng Ming's eyes widened.

Jun Ting Interjected: "General, you must be mistaken, Duke Ming was born and grew up within the palace of Xi Lei, is the son of Duke Rong, how can he be someone else's son?"

CY: This is the problem. 13th Captain, please put yourself in Duke Rong's position, in the case others, you would use someone else's child as a replacement, so would he push his own son into the most dangerous situation of being assassinated at any time?

Feng Ming loosen his grip of the cup in his hand, it fell to the floor and shattered into pieces.

CHAPTER 5

Chang Yen felt a bit embarrassed.

CY: Duke Ming, please don't be alarmed. This is just a suspicion I have. I have thought about it many days, and felt that if I hid it from Duke Ming any longer, I won't be at ease.

FM: (shook his head) No, what General had said makes absolute sense, very reasonable.

Honestly speaking, whether he is Duke Rong's real son or not is not the main point since he himself is a spirit in disguise. If according to Chang Yen's speculation, could it be that his body of his still has a father and mother in this world?

Heavens, the him in modern day was originally an orphan. But in this world, not only does he have Rong Tian as a lover, there's Empress Dowager who is his in law, and a child named Cai Jiang. And right now, what's even better is the appearance of his parents and maybe in the future there might even be aunts and uncles...

The feeling of having a family, Feng Ming was emotional that he trembled a bit, luckily he calmed down. Letting these people know that he is a fake disguised in An He's body would just increase the number of enemies he have.

Chang Yen and Jun Ting saw his face changed from white to red, and then from red to green. One moment clenching his teeth, and then lowering his head to laugh secretly. The next moment, his face was filled with distress like someone at a funeral that they weren't sure what Feng Ming was thinking inside.

CY: Duke Ming, are you alright?

FM: I'm alright. (He ordered the servant to bring over some wine and poured one cup for him) The world is huge, there are many strange happenings. Every day is a new day, thank you General Chang Yen for telling me such exciting news.

Feng Ming was so excited, he was rambling about that he himself did not know what he said. Chang Yen and Jun Ting exchanged glances and just thought that perhaps Feng Ming was trying to hide his sadness and so they just silently ate their food.

Halfway through their meal, a guard sent by Jun Ling Si came rushing in and requested Chang Yen to return.

Feng Ming grabbed a piece of steaming rabbit meat into his mouth and asked.

FM: Do you need me to follow General Chang Yen back as well?

CY: (shook his head) No need, the weather outside is snowing heavily, Duke Ming does not need to exhaust oneself.

This was exactly what Feng Ming wanted. He was lazy and afraid of the cold, why would he want to go out when it's snowing. Feng Ming looked towards Jun Ting, who still had a grumpy face.

FM: Then how about 13th Captain?

JT: Before knowing the outcome of the ambush investigation, I am in charge of supervising Duke Ming. Wherever Feng Ming is, I will be there.

Feng Ming widened his eyes, is this some joke? Where have I offended her? Even though my training method is not earth shattering and impressive enough for you, you still don't have to be like this.

Chang Yen quickly left with the guard and leaving Feng Ming and Jun Ting, along with the female attendants in the living room.

Feng Ming ordered the attendants to leave and then stared at Jun Ting.

FM: Did I offend 13th Captain in some way that I don't know?

Jun Ting glanced over at him, lowered her hand and just place a mouthful of vegetables in her bowl.

FM: If Captain has something to say, just say it. I don't understand your glances.

Jun Ting placed her chopstick down, thinking for awhile and then finally said.

JT: Is Duke Ming trying to provoke the relationship between Bei Qi and Dong Fan?

FM: What?

JT: Ever since Duke Ming participated the military meeting, strange things have happened within the military division. The never before seen strange letter, the system reform, the Gods, the disaster prediction, and it just seems like there is a spy trying to take advantage of the friction between Bei Qi and Dong Fan.

Jun Ting really has inherited her father's keenness, with one glance, she almost cause Feng Ming to let out some cold sweat.

JT: If these speculations are established, then Duke Ming's intentions towards Dong Fan is extremely dangerous and vicious.

FM: Hehe...(Feng Ming giggled) 13th Captain's analytical skills is quite superb, but I don't understand why 13th Captain came to this conclusion after a few hours?

JT: I have my own way.

FM: I believe it's mostly Lieutenant Lin Yin's reasoning?

Feng Ming thought very hard. There must be something strange on the inside. Lin Yin is in charge of investigating things within the palace, and also enthusiastically pursuing Jun Ting. Why within such a critical moment, he put much effort to reverse Jun Ting's focus onto Feng Ming?

JT: Lin Yin is a reliable palace spy, he has good insight into people, I believe his analytical view on the current situation.

Feng Ming coldly laughed a few times; he turned his head away to continue thinking.

Something is definitely not right.

During the time of seriousness, there was suddenly a sound of footsteps echoing forth. That person move very quickly, and soon he appeared in the main room. Feng Ming looked up and noticed that Chang Yen had returned.

Chang Yen patted his shoulders which were filled with snow, panting, and finally said.

CY: Just outside the southern city, we've discovered an ambush. Jun Ling Si has ordered to maintain one's composure and defeat them.

Jun Ting was stunned.

Feng Ming jumped up and yelled out.

FM: Didn't I say that my master wasn't lying to you! My master said that the disaster of Pingxi (the capital of Dong Fan) will begin from the ambush in the southern city. General Chang Yen, you must act with caution.

JT: That place really has an ambush? From what kingdom is the enemy from?

CY: They aren't wearing any official uniform so it's uncertain which kingdom had sent them. However, it's most likely to Kingdom Bei Qi.

JT: Since Master Sun's prediction proved credible, at the moment, I will no longer supervise Duke Ming. General Chang Yen, I will follow you back to see my father to discuss matters relating to the siege.

The two of them left and Feng Ming decided to look for Empress Dowager.

FM: Did Master hear the news? The southern city really have an ambush.

ED: Does Ming Er suspect my words?

FM: How could I? Of course not, your disciple clearly knows that Master is the best/powerful.

Feng Ming laughed, and at an angle where other people cannot see, he winked at Empress Dowager giving the signal: Is it the troops of Xi Lei?

Empress Dowager shook her head and revealed a enigmatic smile.

It's not so? Feng Ming frown, he went in front of the table, using his finger to dip into the tea and quickly wrote the word "Bei" and looked towards Empress Dowager.

Empress Dowager smiled, her eyes revealed a meaning of appreciation.

Well, good for you, Rong Tian. Actually leading the troops of Dong Fan to the place where Bei Qi set ambush and deliberately play it off. It seems like Rong Tian has a powerful intelligent network, Bei Qi had already planned on attacking Ping Xi, lurking in the dark and using a large number of soldiers for the ambush, how does he know?

Feng Ming scratched his head, that was Rong Tian's problem, but he couldn't not think about it.

He thought about Rong Tian hiding somewhere and planning on conquering the world. Every step he takes was silently leading Dong Fan onto the path of destruction. Feng Ming was both proud, but a bit sad at the same time.

Don't know why, but Chang Yen's words suddenly emerge in his mind. If his background is not what he believe it to be then only Empress Dowager would be clear about this. But why would Chang yen choose this point in time to hint this problem to him?

Feng Ming glanced over at Empress Dowager who was sitting with her eyes closed.

FM: Master...

ED: Ah? (slightly opened her eyes)

FM: Nothing... (he changed the subject) After the news of the ambush is clear, Jun Ling Si should be fully convinced. Your disciple guesses that before long, they will ask Master to come to the military meeting hall again.

Empress Dowager smiled.

ED: I'm already old, I don't want to get involved in these things anymore. Forcing myself to leak news of an ambush written on those letters is already considered a repayment for Advisor Lu Dan's kindness. From today onward, I will not bother with Dong Fan's affairs. However...if they ask you anxiously, you should tell them that if Bei Qi dare to invade the territory of Dong Fan, then they will not stop at the southern city. That city, the land is fertile, the river moist, a treasured land filled with spiritual feel from the earth. Perhaps it is not the appropriate place for the troops to defend. If they want to protect the capital, they need to urgently combine Dong Fan's military forces.

After that, Feng Ming bid Empress Dowager a good rest and left the room. He later decided to head over to Lu Dan's quarter to visit him.

The servants told Feng Ming that Lu Dan is taking a short nap and will be out shortly. Feng Ming was waiting in the main room and was getting impatient so he decided to peer inside when a physician came out and excuse himself. Feng Ming questioned the servant is Lu Dan is unwell. She just answered him that the Advisor will come out shortly and asked Duke Ming to wait a bit more.

CHAPTER 6

LD: Lu Dan had arrived late, please forgive me, Duke Ming.

The curtains lifted and a familiar gentle laughter echoed towards Feng Ming's ears. Just as he looked up, he saw Lu Dan cheerfully standing in front of him. Compared to earlier, Lu Dan's composure looked a lot better.

Feng Ming stood up, and examined carefully from top to bottom, he couldn't help sighing in relief. It's strange to say that Lu Dan and him are enemies, far from friends, but yet when he heard that Lu Dan had a high possibility of dying, Feng Ming was constantly worrying about him.

FM: Advisor seems to be a lot better. That's great.

Lu Dan laughed and then looked at Feng Ming.

LD: Duke Ming came here because of this?

When Lu Dan asked him, Feng Ming suddenly realized that he didn't have any purpose for coming here. Even him himself couldn't understand why he intended to find Lu Dan for.

FM: That's not completely it...

Lu Dan motioned Feng Ming to sit down and ordered the servant to bring forth some hot tea.

LD: Duke Ming must encountered many things that are bothering you; therefore, did not mind the snow and wind to come here, hoping to find a quiet place where you can loosen your mind.

Feng Ming looked at Lu Dan surprisingly.

Why are the gentle words flowing from the beautiful lips of his able to make a person escape the overwhelming feeling? It's hard to deny that this Advisor have the ability to hypnotize a person's mind.

LD: Unfortunately, this please is not a quiet place; perhaps the things bothering Duke Ming will need a quieter place.

Once he finished, Lu Dan suddenly faced Feng Ming and gave him a playful wink.

LD: Why not let Lu Dan bring Duke Ming to another place. Someone, prepare the horse.

Feng Ming didn't have time to think, but follow Lu Dan outside.

FM: Where does Advisor plan on taking me?

Lu Dan climbed onto the horse, held onto the reins and turned around to say to Feng Ming.

LD: Once Duke Ming is there, you'll know. Duke Ming and I will just wander around within the palace, guards are not allowed to follow behind.

Lu Dan talked with Feng Ming who was riding another horse.

LD: Although they are Jun Ling Si's men, however, within this palace, they would not dare to face me directly. I clearly know the feeling of being closely monitored.

FM: I can't believe that within the inner palace, you can ride horses, compare to the Forbidden...uh, a palace I've once heard of, this is more welcoming. That place, even sneezing is a crime. After sweating a bit, the whole body feels comfortable. That's right, where is Advisor bringing me to?

LD: I used to always think that in the future, when I have full power, I will build a peaceful place within the inner palace. Besides the Great King and I, no one is allowed to come close. If there's any upsetting matter, we could go there to be at peace for awhile, using that time to forget the unimportant things in life.

FM: That's right, the upsetting matters within the palace are abundant, it's better to give priority and more attention to your own state of mind. It's better to let go of all the pressure, otherwise sooner or later, one's mind might become crazy. The quiet place within the palace that Advisor found must have great snow scenery, a beautiful quiet place.

LD: It's up ahead.

Feng Ming looked up and was suddenly surprised.

FM: The Heaven and Earth palace?

Lu Dan got off of his horse.

LD: The new priests are inside, without permission they are not allowed to come outside.

Feng Ming followed behind and got off of his horse. He silently thought: Could it be that the place Lu Dan chose to retreat is the Heaven and Earth palace?

At first, Feng Ming stated that he didn't want to go inside. Lu Dan reassured him that they are not and are just going to sit on the steps outside of the Heaven and Earth palace.

Though it was cold outside, Feng Ming was glad that they won't be entering the place that was flowing with blood and terrible tragic events that happened in there.

While sitting on the steps, Feng Ming gazed at Lu Dan.

LD: Before eradicating the priestesses, I've always look forward to one day where I can safely sit here and quietly enjoy the snow drifting under the heaven.

Lu Dan grabbed a handful of snow underneath his feet, slowly knead it into a snowball and then let the snowball fall from his palms and hit the steps. He smiled as he recalled his past memories.

LD: That day, I was sitting here, my whole body was shivering. That was when a young man I've never seen before, brought a cloak and draped it over my back. That time, I didn't know who he was, he also didn't know who I was. The both of us just knew that it was cold, but couldn't bear to leave the beautiful snow scenery. Both of us sitting side by side, sharing a cloak, holding each other's hands, and lying against each other, hoping to be a bit warmer.

FM: Is that person the Great King?

Not good, Lu Dan suddenly decided to come to this old place to watch the snow and to reminisce the first romantic encounter, giving someone an ominous feeling.

Lu Dan nodded his head. He turned his head and using his fingertip, drew something in the snow that was unclear.

LD: Is there something that Duke Ming is hiding from me?

Feng Ming felt like thunder was striking during a sunny day, in a moment, his limbs were stiff. He hesitantly turned around.

FM: Is there something that I am hiding from Advisor?

LD: Could Duke Ming hide anything from me? Duke Ming has already worn the unparalleled sword on your waist, you should already understand that if anything bad were to happen, Duke Ming's life would be on the line. These days my body has been unwell and there have been lots of news within the palace that I haven't taken the time to hear them all to take caution. The news have become more and more strange lately, causing me to be deeply disturbed. And the master said that something big is about to happen. All of these years, this is the first time I have this feeling. Ah, perhaps a person who is ill will become more suspicious.

Feng Ming promptly changed the subject.

FM: What is the real condition of Advisor's health? Earlier, I saw the royal physician.

LD: Does Duke Ming really want to know?

Feng Ming nodded his head.

Lu Dan thought for a moment and then said.

LD: I guess so, since right now Duke Ming is like an ally, in order to deal with the pressure from Jun Ling Si, I will let you know the situation. (he paused a bit and frowned) I have made a mistake.

FM: A mistake?

LD: Yes, a big mistake. Originally, I thought I should be able to live for the next 300 days, which is enough for me to accomplish my wish, making complete arrangements for the matter regarding the Great King.

FM: Is Advisor saying that your predictions are wrong?

LD: Lu Dan's medical knowledge can be considered well versed; therefore, my prediction cannot be wrong. Something that will make a person's embarrass, during the time at the riverside of Yong Tin, using the scheme to lure Duke Ming's soul, I had to use my fresh blood as a medium, that method had caused me to lose strength, my life span's been reduced from 300 days to 200 days.

Feng Ming's heart sank, watching Lu Dan, he didn't know what to say, frowning for some time, he finally decided to speak up.

FM: Advisor shouldn't be scaring oneself. I have seen many different examples, such as cancer...Ah, something that terminally ill patients have, after receiving a physical examination, the physician would say that they only have 3 months to live, but as result, depending on the person's will, they were able to live for decades. If Advisor's willpower is like that, I believe...

LD: Duke Ming does not have to comfort me. In fact, if Duke Ming didn't come to look for me, Lu Dan would eventually look for you. Because...Lu Dan probably would not have the opportunity to witness Duke Ming's victory against Jun Qing and stepped onto the position of "Colonial Secretary"?

Feng Ming suddenly jumped up with a pale look.

FM: Was Advisor planning on telling me that you will soon...That can't be? Even if Advisor had predicted wrong, with a bit of willpower it would be more than 200 days, the three months between Jun Ling Si and I...

LD: Seven days. It's not more than two hundred days, it's seven days.

FM: How can that be? Why?!

Lu Dan stood up and faced Feng Ming. The dark clouds slowly moved across the sky. The cold wind glided across the treetops.

Lu Dan looked at Feng Ming for a long while and then smiled.

LD: Because I want Duke Ming to live perfectly healthy.

CHAPTER 7

FM: (feeling puzzled) What is Advisor trying to say?

LD: Duke Ming's body has been crippled/damaged; if at this time you were not treated, then in the future your body would be inevitably grow weaker, just like mine.

Lu Dan held out his hand and lifted Feng Ming's chin, staring straight into the depths of Feng Ming's pupils.

LD: I don't know why, but I have a bad feeling about the future of Dong Fan. A disaster is coming, Dong Fan probably will not escape this catastrophe. But I truly believe, Duke Ming will be able to protect the Great King. Because of the Great King, Duke Ming must be safe. These last few days, I will use the rest of my life span to help regain Duke Ming's strength that had been lost.

FM: NO!

Feng Ming stepped back and stared at Lu Dan, shook his head and said.

FM: There's no need! I forbid you to do so!

Feng Ming vaguely knew that there was some truth in Lu Dan's words. Ever since the battle at Aman River, indeed his body slowly weakens. Therefore, every time Rong Tian heard him cough, he would be scared.

Even so, it does not mean that he can just sit back and relax while another person use their precious life to restore his strength.

Lu Dan wanted to open his mouth to say something, but he couldn't stand the cold wind and suddenly coughed for a long moment before he stopped and looked up at Feng Ming who was still recovering from shock.

LD: Does Duke Ming have any ability to stop me from doing it? This place is Dong Fan palace, I can partition magic. Duke Ming should not forget, you had just used the refreshments/tea from my palace, within those refreshments, I have cast a type of "media", but this time it is not fresh blood.

FM: (shocked) Why are you doing this?

Lu Dan smiled and gently came close to Feng Ming.

LD: I want you, to forever become indebted by my kindness.

The beautiful face like a god right in front of his eyes, Feng Ming's body shivered all over.

How deep is Lu Dan's knowledge? Perhaps he still doesn't know what Feng Ming is hiding from him, but for his most beloved person, he is willing to create a better situation for the worst future outcome.

If because of Feng Ming, Lu Dan sacrifices his precious last few days, if Ping Xi does have a catastrophe, if Xi Lei's army attack, if Rong Tian's plans succeed in overtaking Dong Fan, then the least Feng Ming could do was to risk his life in order to protect Dong Fan King.

He stared at the beautiful pair of eyes and a moment later, he finally found enough strength to regain his natural breathing.

FM: Is it worth it?

The smile of Lu Dan's face flourished, he suddenly stood straight up and looked across at the snow covered pine forest in the distance.

LD: Does Duke Ming know what is considered "a general trend of events"? If a large ship is flowing into the rapids and you can't control the direction with the rudder, no matter how intelligent the person on the ship is in calculating when it will hit the reef, the person still won't have the power to change the situation. He could only watch the ship head towards destruction. Even if someone is powerful, he cannot rule the world on his own, because a person's strength is always limited.

He turned around to face Feng Ming and sighed.

LD: Dong Fan is flowing into the rapids, and the rudder is being controlled by those of opposite views, If the rudder can be control entirely by one person then perhaps Dong Fan can survive a bit longer. Obtaining sole power is never easy; therefore, the Great King needs someone to help him. But the one thing I'm worried about is an appearance of an unexpected enemy within rapids.

His glance strikes towards Feng Ming's direction, causing Feng Ming to feel a burst of coldness down his spine.

At that moment, a soldier came and told Feng Ming that Jun Ling Si requested his presence as an emergency arises.

Feng Ming arrived at the Military Meeting hall, he hoped that Rong Tian didn't send another letter. Chang Yen told Feng Ming that they also requested Master Sun to come too, but she

refused, which Feng Ming added that his Master didn't want to involve herself with military affairs anymore.

Jun Ling Si walked in and one of the soldiers informed him that majority of the soldiers have been urgently recalled, except for Ninth Army and Eleventh Army, who are currently in the outside border, while the other troops who are within the capital's vicinity will be coming back tonight.

Jun Qing nodded and looked over at Xie Guang (another general)

JQ: Please tell us a bit about the situation.

XG: Not so long ago, I was ordered by Jun Ling Si to bring the 12th Army to take care of the ambush in the south. Unfortunately, the enemies already knew our position, the siege was not only unsuccessful, they set up many traps and our troops had received mass casualties.

CY: Moreover, many signs showed that the soldiers ambush outside the city were far more than the number we had estimated. We can say that our capital is now in danger.

JQ: I have ordered the brightest elite to march back into the capital.

Feng Ming was suddenly aware that the conversation between him and Empress Dowager was overheard.

One of the Generals said: "That means that the military forces of all the other cities are withdrawn."

JQ: The Capital city is more important than the rest, we cannot take the risk.

FM: Bei Qi's strategy sure is strange. What's the point in capturing the Capital? Capturing is easy, but defending it is difficult. Occupying the central capital, the surrounding cities will immediately surround them; therefore, their victory won't last long.

JQ: The chaos caused by the Priestesses just ended, which is the period of turbulence for Dong Fan. If right now, the Capital were to have any unexpected incident, it will shake the foundation of the entire kingdom. Even if we can recapture the capital, the people would already be fretting, that would be a devastating blow that will only lead to destruction. During such a critical moment like this and choosing to create a surprise attack on our capital, this plan will cause them to lose a lot of troops, but it will lower our strength and Dong Fan's morale. At the end, we are still at a lost.

A Lieutenant of the 5th Army pound the table and said: "I don't know who came up this such a sinister plan like this, if I capture him, I definitely will boil him alive and throw him to the wolves to vent my hatred."

All the other generals and soldiers nodded their heads, only Chang Yen was a bit sad. He looked towards Jun Qing, who gave him a sign.

CY: There is also one other important thing...

He was a veteran general of Dong Fan, once he raised his voice, the crowd quieted down almost immediately.

CY: All of the signs we've found had indicated that there is a spy among us. Especially with the plan to take care of the ambush in the south today, only people from lieutenant rank and higher knows about this.

If the highest level of military affairs planning of Dong Fan are known the enemies and within their grasps, then wouldn't it be the same as fighting the enemy on the battlefield blindfolded?

From the Lieutenant ranking and above, there is a traitor?

More than a dozen eyes, sharply focused their attention on one person.

At that time, the hairs on Feng Ming's body stood straight up. Are they mistaken? Even though he could be considered as a traitor per se, but this is definitely not his doing!

Coming in contact with Jun Qing's gaze, Feng Ming suddenly stood up.

FM: I should be the person that is not qualified to participate in the military affairs meeting and of course not on the same level as Jun Ling Si. Forget it, those who is suspected by others, no matter what he says will only be seen as excuses. I just want to know, how will Jun Ling Si plan on dealing with me?

One general from 14th Army stepped forward and said: "I request Jun Ling Si to hand over this spy to me, I guarantee that within one hour time, I will make him reveal all the secrets he has."

Feng Ming secretly felt chills down his spine.

FM: One hour later, not only will I reveal all the secrets, but I'll also ensure that in the future I will never again fight with Jun Ling Si for anything. Haha, anyway, everyone here are all from the military division, no one will dare to say that Jun Ling Si used despicable means to deal with a rival.

Jun Ting's glanced towards Feng Ming's direction, the entire military meeting hall went extremely quiet.

Feng Ming bit his lips, stood there facing Jun Qing. All sort of cruel punishments that he had seen on television, it seems like he will finally have a chance to experience them, which will

not be something pleasant. The worst thing is, Empress Dowager is still within the inner palace of Dong Fan, this matter will definitely implicate her as well.

CHAPTER 8

Jun Qing's deep steady voice , every word and sentence was clearly heard inside the meeting hall.

JQ: Does Duke Ming think that Jun Qing is a person who ignores his military prowess, the Jun Family century old reputation, to resort to despicable means?

After saying that, Jun Qing looked over at Chang Yen and gave him a signal.

CY: (stood up and said) Ever since Duke Ming was admitted to the palace, every movement of Duke Ming was closely monitored. He was heavily monitored ever since Master Sun Zi had deciphered the direction of the ambush to the time we've sent troops to suppress the ambush. Every movement, every person he came in contact with, every word Duke Ming said, we have carefully analyzed. Although Duke Ming's actions at times can be quite strange, but I can guarantee that Duke Ming does not have the time to transfer message to the ambush soldiers.

Feng Ming's nerves slightly loosened, he clenched his teeth, just a bit more and these people almost gave him a heart attack. However, if every movement was closely monitored by them then when he changed his clothes to take a bath, would they even... Next time when he take a bath, he must wear some clothes so he won't be at a loss.

Xie Guang added: "Also, we have concluded that the traces that were left by the ambush were from Bei Qi troops. If the spy is Duke Ming, then those who ambush us should have been Xi Lei's men."

One other general said: "Then that means there is still a spy among us?"

"That's right. Also, we have to capture him before Dong Fan decides to make another attack."

JQ: Everyone, please rest assure. There is no spy without any flaws. This matter, we will clearly investigate tonight. Right now, this meeting is temporary on hold, no matter what no one is allowed to leave this Military meeting hall.

Jun Qing invited Duke Ming to follow him outside for a chatting.

Jun Qing asked Feng Ming what he is intending on doing and Feng Ming didn't quite understand his question.

JQ: The Advisor's illness has reached the point that it cannot be ignored. This matter, both you and I clearly know the answer. After the chaos caused by the Priestesses came the mentioning of Duke Ming participating in military affairs, the Advisor falling ill, and an appearance of an ambush outside the cit. The rapids continued to flood beneath our feet, the crisis is at hand...Duke Ming should give me an answer.

Feng Ming innocently scratched his head.

FM: I thought that Jun Ling Si planned on bringing me out here to discuss about the spy situation, and was trying hard to find an explanation for you. Who would have thought that Jun Ling Si asked me such a strange question like this, how do you want me to answer you?

JQ: Doesn't Duke Ming think that you're very fortunate? I almost believed that Duke Ming is someone who is loved by the Gods. To be honest with Duke Ming, if it wasn't for Dong Fan's situation to be at a delicate juncture, Duke Ming would never be standing here talking to me right now. It's not that Jun Qing want to boast, but within Dong Fan, there isn't anyone that I cannot kill. Advisor must have known this and elected you without worry, to confront me.

FM: If Jun Ling Si is in the mood of talking with me, then I will also be honest. Advisor is very ill, but this doesn't seem to be much of a secret. Advisor wishes for me to replace his position, this Jun Ling Si probably could guess. This matter we don't have to be unclear anymore. Of course, I don't plan on fighting with Jun Ling Si over that position. The thing I don't understand is that everything Advisor had done is for the Great King. Jun Ling Si is also someone who is loyal to the Great King, everyone has the same goal so there shouldn't be any kind of contradiction. Why must Jun Ling Si go against Advisor's wishes at this critical time?

If you want to deal with Advisor then that's that, but to also deal with me then that's really unfair.

JQ: Duke Ming is really a mild-manner person. In fact, Jun Qing understands Advisor's effort. The loyalty of Advisor towards the Great King can touched anyone. That's why, when I heard of Advisor's illness, the first feeling I got was not happiness, but of sadness.

He turned around to see the shocked face of Feng Ming and decided to explain.

JQ: Duke Ming does not need to be surprised. The person that I highly respect is usually my rival.

FM: Then between Jun Ling Si and Advisor...

JQ: It seems Duke Ming still does not understand the main conflict between us. The main contradiction between the military division and Advisor is that the Advisor is only loyal to the Great King, but the military division is loyal to the entire royal family of Dong Fan. If I say it like this, Duke Ming should have a clear understanding now.

So basically, Lu Dan wishes for Dong Fan King to have sole power (monarchy) over national affairs, over Dong Fan; however, Jun Qing wants a democracy type of government so the power will not solely lie in one person's hands since he figured that Dong Fan King is not a very wise king and doesn't want him to make many wrong decisions.

FM: In the past, there was the Head Priestess who could suppress the Advisor's power; therefore, Jun Ling Si was silent. But after the priestess's power has been abolished, in order to stop Advisor from having sole control over national affairs, Jun Ling Si was forced to step forward.

JQ: Advisor is ill, if he doesn't have much ambition, the military division would not take action because after his death, Dong Fan will no longer have one person to determine the life and death of the kingdom. However, we never expected that Advisor would push Duke Ming forward.

FM: Jun Ling Si doesn't need to tell me all of this. Actually, I have never thought of being a part of the power struggle. I think it's best for everyone to just shake hands and become friends. However, the thing that I find strange is if Jun Ling Si is against (Advisor's decision) then you can prevent me from participating in the military meeting or even kill me.

JQ: Killing one person is nothing hard. But there are two reasons why I didn't choose this barbaric practice in the first place. One, the Advisor had chosen an appropriate time to let Duke Ming participate in the national affairs of Dong Fan, at this time I'm trying very hard to prevent chaos to Dong Fan. Two...I have always admired the wisdom of Advisor. For him to choose a person to replace him, then that person will be able to bring unexpected benefits to Dong Fan than before. A rare talent like that, Jun Qing does not want to destroy. Of course, if that person were to become an obstacle to the stability of Dong Fan then I will not hesitate to deal with him.

Feng Ming started smiling and nodding in agreement until he heard the last sentence.

FM: I love most is stability. I will not be an obstacle to stability. (However, I only love to stabilize Xi Lei).

JQ: Is this Duke Ming's answer? Duke Ming will promise that there won't be a future implementation of monarchy and will allow Dong Fan to become a place of shared balance power? If that's the case, then let us clap hands and make the oath. From today onward, Jun Qing will see Duke Ming as an ally, will assist Duke Ming to become Dong Fan's

Colonial Secretary. However, Duke Ming will ensure that Dong Fan will not become a kingdom where the Great King receives absolute power.

From the corner of Feng Ming's eyes, he noticed that there were several tall, strong guards who were placing their hands on their swords. He found out that he had unwittingly walked into an uninhabited corner.

Jun Qing had lured him here; maybe if the discussion did not go as planned, he probably would take action here. Thinking about that, how could Feng Ming dare to think of something otherwise then to raise his hand and take the oath?

FM: Does Jun Ling Si think that Feng Ming is someone who agrees to a monarchy ruling? However, I want to add a requirement, Jun Ling Si have to swear that you will be loyal to the Great King. The King and his men may have different opinions, but the king is still the king. If not, then how can I face the Advisor?

JQ: Does Duke Ming think that Jun Qing is not a loyal official? For centuries, the Jun family never had a traitor!

FM: Good!

They both made the oath.

Thinking about it now, Rong Tian faking his death scheme is not bad. If they didn't believe that Rong Tian is dead, then they wouldn't lower their guard, and this good outcome would never occur.

Because of Rong Tian's death, Lu Dan also gave Feng Ming an opportunity, and because of Lu Dan's trust in Feng Ming, Jun Qing also gave Feng Ming an opportunity.

Somewhere inside Feng Ming's mind, he thought...could this be the Gods' will?

They decided to head back inside the meeting hall, heading back, Jun Qing asked Feng Ming if Master Sun is looking for another disciple. Feng Ming can't believe that Empress Dowager's words also travelled to Jun Qing's ears. Jun Qing recommended his daughter, Jun Ting and hoped that Feng Ming can add in good words for her. Feng Ming happily agreed, knowing inside that none of those really matters once Dong Fan is conquered by Rong Tian.

They returned inside the meeting hall and one of the Generals said: "News have travelled stating that 7 of our best armies have returned back within the vicinity of the city, and are temporarily concentrated in one area, awaiting orders."

After finished hearing that, Jun Qing returned to his seat and glanced across the room.

JQ: The spies have already been captured.

All the other Generals expressed a sense of surprise.

JQ: Bring them here.

The curtains lifted and Chang Yen led four tall guards inside. Two of them dragged a young man in, which have yet to know whether he was still alive or not. They charged inside the hall and placed the man in the middle of the room and excuse themselves.

Suddenly, all eyes were focused on the man lying there.

This person wore Dong Fan's military uniform, but suffered severe punishment. His clothes were almost torn from being whipped, his back was bloody with horrible scars that one couldn't bear to see, his limbs were twisted unnaturally and apparently been broken.

Chang Yen faced Jun Qing and reported.

CY: He has confessed that they are 5 other spies from Bei Qi, but they don't hold a high position. Those five people have been arrested and awaiting for Jun Ling Si's orders on how to deal with them. I have also carefully interrogated him and searched his residence; there should be no other senior Generals who colluded with him.

Feng Ming now understood why a moment ago, Jun Qing ordered for all the other Generals to not leave the meeting hall. It was to find out which person colluded with which and with all of them gathered together, it would be easier.

But who is this traitor, why does his stature look a bit familiar? The spy was facing the ground and so Feng Ming could only see his back.

Xie Guang angrily shouted out: "How hateful, allowing this kind of person to enter the military meeting hall. This traitor, compensate the lives of my soldiers!" After shouting, he fiercely walked toward that person and kicked the spy in the waist, turning him over.

The bloodstained face was now within viewing distance, Feng Ming took a closer look and was suddenly surprised, that person was Lin Yin.

Looking back, Feng Ming finally realized why he hated Feng Ming so much and persuaded Jun Ting to have a bad impression of him, just because Feng Ming and his master exposed Bei Qi's ambush location.

Looking around, he noticed that Jun Ting wasn't here today and wasn't standing behind Jun Ling Si as always.

"How is Jun Ling Si intending on disposing this person?"

One General said: "This person betrayed us, causing our Dong Fan's army to lose troops, we can't easily let this matter go."

"Not only that, the days before we fought with Bei Qi, we don't know how many other people he had betrayed."

Can't believe that just one mere ambush incident, Jun Qing immediately caught the traitor that hidden himself. Seems like this old guy is not as simple as he seems. Thinking about this, Feng Ming couldn't help to be on full alert and trembled a bit.

Xie Guang: "I think we should lynch him."

Jun Qing's eyes rested on Lin Yin, who was still barely breathing.

JQ: It's a shame that this person is a talented young man, but unfortunately cannot be of used to Dong Fan. Well, Duke Ming's face seemed to change, have something came to mind?

FM: Ah, I was just wondering how Jun Ling Si had concluded that this person is a spy?

JQ: The truth is actually very simple. The spy not only had to be someone with a high position in the army of Dong Fan, but he also has to be familiar with the inner palace and current situation of Dong Fan, ...choosing the perfect moment to take extreme and effective means on attacking the capital, Ping Xi.

Feng Ming finally understood that Lin Yin was in charge of gathering news and secrets within the inner palace of Dong Fan; therefore, he would be the most likely suspect.

Chang Yen added: "Once we have a suspect, we would quickly take control of the situation and find conclusive evidence as proof such as letters, etc, which is not quite difficult. We have discovered messages between him and Bei Qi at his residence."

Other generals continued to discuss on how to dispose of Lin Yin.

"I believe we should continue interrogating him. He had infiltrated within Dong Fan for many years, he must have a lot of secrets that he haven't said."

"General Jun Yao, do you not believe in Chang Yen's interrogation style? If they are within General Chang Yen's hands, I guarantee that no one will be able to hide any secrets."

Can't believe that Chang Yen's methods are very sinister like that, you definitely cannot judge a person by his appearance.

"If there is no other value for him, then we should just dispose of him as we did the other spy. We'll take good care of him, bandage his wounds, let him eat and drink to the fullest, and then skin him alive, let him die slowly."

Feng Ming heard that and a cold chill ran down his spine.

While in discussion, suddenly the curtains lifted opened and everyone was silent.

Jun Ting had her right hand onto her sword; her sharp eyes gazed at each of the Generals and finally landed softly on the ground next to Lin Yin who was covered in blood.

Jun Qing lowered his voice: "I ordered you to give support to the armies that are retreating back to the capital, why did you come back halfway?"

Jun Ting didn't answer, but slowly made her way in front of Lin Yin. Not caring for the many glances surrounding her, she kneeled down, reached out her hands to hold Lin Yin's hand, which bones can be seen from his open skin. She looked down to see the face covered in blood, hard to make out the features.

JT: Is there anything you want to say to me?

JQ: (angry) Jun Ting, go outside for me!

Jun Ting acted as if she didn't hear, her eyes focused on Lin Yin

JT: I've came back, you don't need to suffer anymore.

JQ: Someone, take 13th Captain away!

Several strong soldiers stepped forward, but Jun Ting suddenly lifted her head and gave them a cold stare causing them to step back.

Jun Ting looked down and quietly gazed at Lin Yin.

Lin Yin smiled and whispered a few words. Probably he was beaten up that his teeth were gone and only blood gushed out from his mouth, how could anyone hear anything?

Jun Ting nodded her head.

JQ: Jun Ting, do you want to put shame to the Jun family's reputation?

Jun Qing couldn't hold it in any longer and stood up. He knew that no one dared to put their hands on his daughter and so he walked down the steps towards Jun Ting's direction.

JQ: If you don't listen to my words...

With just three steps from Jun Ting, a sound of a sword withdrawing from its scabbard was heard.

Jun Ting stared down at Lin Yin with love and affection; she stood up, drew her sword and stabbed downward. The sound of the sharp blade stabbing into the skin and meat, echoed throughout the hall, fresh blood scattered through the air.

In a blink of an eye, almost everyone was shocked at the scattered of blood to the point they couldn't move.

Jun Ting pierced her sword into the heart of Lin Yin, quietly looking at Lin Yin's face and then withdrawing her sword. Using the cuff of her sleeve, she wiped off the blood and placed her sword back into the scabbard. At this moment, she turned around and faced her father.

JT: Lin Yin is my subordinate; it is not something outrageous for me to personally dispose of him.

Even Jun Qing had lost his composure he always had, he didn't say anything.

JT: If father does not have any other thing to say, your daughter will continue her order of supporting the army.

Under the glances of everyone, Jun Ting excused herself as usual, turned herself towards the entrance, lifted the curtains and turned her head back to look. Her gaze landed on Feng Ming, causing Feng Ming's blood to freeze in place.

After Jun Ting left, Chang Yen seem to have just recovered from the shock and tried to change the subject regarding the spy.

CY: At the moment, the ambush is still outside the city wall, according to our estimates, the number is not small. I believe that when our elite armies make their emergent journey back here, with their military aid, we will immediately wipe out the ambush troops outside, while they have yet to deploy the first attack.

"I agree."

"But where is exactly is the ambush now? How do we attack?"

So they continued to discuss about their plans for a counterattack. Lin Yin's corpse was already removed from the military hall, the bloodstains on the floor was wiped down, leaving a pool of red blot and unpleasant smell of blood in the air.

Feng Ming decided to ask permission to leave as he doesn't feel well, especially everything that happened. Chang Yen excused him from the meeting and Feng Ming returned back to his quarters. He retold everything to Empress Dowager.

Feng Ming was sad about what happened to Jun Ting and Lin Yin and when thinking about Lin Yin, he started wondering about Rong Tian. He wanted to ask Empress Dowager about Rong Tian, but figured that they are always being monitored, he decided not to. Because of this heavy burden and deep worry, Feng Ming wanted to excuse himself. As he tried to go outside the room to perhaps eat something, his chest hurts and he fainted.

CHAPTER 9

Empress Dowager ordered someone to come and call for the physician to see Feng Ming. The servants helped Feng Ming up and slowly Feng Ming regained consciousness.

FM: What happened?

ED: You suddenly fainted; does your chest still hurt? How do you feel right now?

FM: Ah, I remember. It must be because I stood up suddenly and I had a drop in blood pressure (orthostatic hypotension), it's fairly normal.

ED: Even so, let's have the physician take a closer look.

Thinking about having his pulse taken and then having to take the bitter medication, Feng Ming forcefully objected.

FM: Let's not have the physician check. Just a bit of rest and some food are enough. That's right, it must be because I haven't ate anything therefore my blood pressure is low.

Feng Ming eagerly tried to sit up, but everyone quickly stopped him, "No."

One of the servants quickly pushed Feng Ming down and ordered the others: "Hurry and check if the physician has come yet."

One of the female attendants from outside came to report: "The Advisor has arrived."

Just then, Lu Dan appeared at the entrance of the room, nodded at Empress Dowager to greet her, quickly walked towards the bed, and examined Feng Ming's pulse.

Everyone knew that Lu Dan was a medical expert so they excused themselves.

Feng Ming saw the serious look on his face and didn't dare to swarm.

FM: Hopefully the prescription Advisor write won't be hard to swallow.

Lu Dan focused hard on taking Feng Ming's pulse and then let his wrist go, he smiled at Feng Ming.

LD: Nothing to worry, no need to drink medication. This matter just let Lu Dan take care of it, Duke Ming just take a good rest.

Feng Ming heard Lu Dan's reply and felt there was a hidden message, he felt worried and quickly grabbed onto Lu Dan's hand.

FM: Advisor must never ever do anything crazy.

LD: Don't worry Duke Ming. Things that are not beneficial, Lu Dan will never do them. You just need to take a good rest.

Not taking notice of Feng Ming's complicated gaze, Lu Dan stood up and took a bow at Empress Dowager.

LD: These two days, there are many matters to take care of, I couldn't entertain Master Sun, please forgive me.

ED: (smiled) Don't mention it, Advisor. Thank you Advisor for looking after my disciple.

LD: Please don't say that. Master is also an expert in medicine, but when Lu Dan heard that Duke Ming became ill, I completely forgot about it and as a result, embarrass myself in front of you. Since there's nothing wrong with Duke Ming's body, Lu Dan still have other things to take care of and can't stay long, if there's any free time, I will come by to entertain Master.

Lu Dan bid farewell to Feng Ming and left.

Seeing that Feng Ming's condition was a bit better, Empress Dowager felt relieved.

ED: Next time, don't be like that, you gave me quite a shock.

FM: Next time, I'll sit for a longer time and slowly stand up or else if I scare Master into fainting, what shall we do then?

But in Feng Ming's mind, he wondered if what Lu Dan said about his (FM) health condition weakening is true.

Feng Ming decided to switch topic and told Empress Dowager that he'll be going outside to eat dinner and wishes her a good sleep.

Feng Ming ate dinner and his servant requested him to take a bath afterwards and sleep early.

Feng Ming thought about all the things that happened today and found that he had not waste a single minute. In the morning, he find out that Empress Dowager wanted to accept another disciple, afterwards discussed training method with Jun Ting, the second secret message from Rong Tian arrived, Empress Dowager told them where the ambush was, the ambush was discovered and suspicion of a spy. The traitor was Lin Yin, someone who Jun Ting loved. Besides that, there was Lu Dan who worried about his fate.

Today was definitely a long day.

Lying on the soft and warm bed, Feng Ming quickly went into a beautiful sleep.

Late in the night, Chang Yen came by to see Feng Ming, but after hearing about his illness, he decided that if Feng Ming does not wake up after the servant call for him then they don't need to wake him up. The servant tried to call for Feng Ming to wake up, but he was in a deep sleep. After reporting to Chang Yen, he decided not to bother Feng Ming and tell the servant that if Feng Ming wakes up tomorrow, tell him to come to the military meeting hall.

That night, Feng Ming had a very good dream, he dreamt of Rong Tian embracing him and they were both at the Crown Prince's quarters.

Feng Ming woke up the next day, close to the afternoon. The servant told him that late last night, Chang Yen came by to look for him.

FM: (surprised) Does he have something urgent to come by that late? How come you didn't wake me up? Ah, you also need to ask him what it's about.

The servant told him: "I didn't ask. General Chang Yen came by late at night; I highly suspect that it's about military affairs. Regarding military affairs, I don't dare to ask."

After dressing up, Feng Ming went to see Empress Dowager.

FM: Your disciple believes that he should go over to the military meeting hall to see what's going on.

ED: I believe that it's just regular military affairs, if not then General Chang Yen would have waken you up. Anyways, go ahead and check, don't worry too much.

Empress Dowager glanced over at Feng Ming and faintly displayed a bit of satisfaction.

Feng Ming thought: *could it be that Rong Tian has started to take action?* This little deer stood up, didn't dare to ask further and with a good mood ran towards the meeting hall.

Don't know if there was any meeting today or not or whether it ended, but within the meeting hall there was only Chang Yen and a few other unimportant Generals. Feng Ming secretly glanced in all four directions, but didn't see Jun Ting at all.

Chang Yen saw Feng Ming charged in and invited him to sit down.

CY: I heard that Duke Ming was ill yesterday, are you feeling any better today?

Feng Ming thanked Chang Yen for asking and directly went into the subject about the reason Chang Yen came last night.

Chang Yen laughed and said.

CY: So because of that, Duke Ming is curious. To be honest, Duke Ming is someone the Great King appointed to participate in the military meeting; therefore, every new news we

received have to be reported to Duke Ming. If the military news are not reported to Duke Ming, then we would be going against the King's orders.

Though Feng Ming didn't know much about how the military division is run, this much he could understand.

CY: Last night, we have received news to the location of another ambush. Xie Guang immediately brought his troops to take care of the ambush and was victorious. The news traveled forth just in time when I was taking some fresh air from taking care of military affairs. I came over to Duke Ming's place to report this news to you immediately, but Duke Ming had already went to sleep, so I didn't have the heart to wake you up. I was also planning on talking with you, but since the military news isn't quite urgent, I didn't want the servants to bother you.

FM: So that's it. I just thought that the matter was urgent that cause General Chang Yen to come by late last night.

CY: Sitting late at night in the cold wind, a person made of metal would be tired. Why wouldn't I go outside to send a message and stretched out some muscle? If Duke Ming wasn't sleeping, then I would have been bothering your late dinner meal.

The two of them started laughing.

At that moment, Xie Guang hastily came in, seeing the both of them, he scolded at Chang Yen.

XG: Look at you, I was freezing to death outside last night and you're here joking around.

He sat down in the opposite direction; his hands massaged his shoulders. He sneezed aloud and rubbed his nose with his hand.

XG: Even though the sun is up, but the temperature is still cold causing me to ache all over, don't know if I've caught the cold from last night. (He again sneezed two more times)

Chang Yen and Xie Guang are friends for many years so Chang Yen decided to tease him.

CY: Your bones and muscles are even older than mine. Haha, last night you have made a great accomplishment, Jun Ling Si knows this so you'll eventually be rewarded.

XG: That doesn't mean much. 100 little soldiers like that, don't know if their leader abandoned them for being useless or not, but their weapons were weak, and they couldn't even hold onto their spears steadily. Seeing our troops, we didn't even started battling when they were already scared and given up. If all of Bei Qi's soldiers are like this, then I think that there is no need to battle. Our soldiers just need to sneeze once and it can flip them over. If we knew this earlier, then we wouldn't need to urgently bring all our armies within

the capital. If you look all over our military camp, everywhere is people, even the sleeping area is not enough, the campsite is flooded with soldiers twice or three times the usual.

CY: Are you questioning the orders of Jun Ling Si? The capital is the heart of the kingdom, so we have to be careful a bit.

XG: Who dares to question Jun Ling Si's orders? These words cannot be said like a joke.

Feng Ming thought hard, but couldn't understand what Rong Tian's plans were. Was the ambush last night part of his scheme or not? How vexing, Empress Dowager won't say a single word about it. Even though he got connections to Rong Tian, but everything is still unclear. Thinking for awhile, he looked up and asked Xie Guang.

FM: How does General know the location of the other ambush by Bei Qi?

XG: I don't understand the words of the Gods so how can I know the location of the ambush?

Chang Yen decided to explain to Feng Ming.

CY: Last night, General Xie Guang captured alive a few prisoner of war, right now they are being interrogated in separate barracks, soon we will be able to know the location of the other ambush.

XG: I'm afraid it won't be that easy.

Xie Guang remembered those prisoners and let out a long sigh.

XG: Those prisoners, they not only fear death but is also confused. We interrogated three of them and two already wet their pants. They are people from Bei Qi, but denied that they are soldiers, just stated that they are ordinary people of Bei Qi.

CY: (felt a bit surprised) Then why did they hid themselves outside of Ping Xi? And why do they have weapons from Bei Qi's soldiers?

XG: That's right! Even they themselves don't know that they reached Dong Fan in what ways. A bunch of clueless group, their speech were disorderly, I have interrogated throughout the night and was furious to no end. Just a moment ago, this Guang Ying came to my barrack and knew that I couldn't find out anything, so he dare to tease me, telling me that my method of torture was not evil enough; therefore, those prisoners were not scared. I was so mad, I ordered my subordinates to send those captives to the other barracks and see if they could find out anything from them.

Feng Ming seemed to have a flash of light in his mind, but he couldn't make clear of it. He tried hard to think about it, but couldn't quite understand. His temple began throbbing in pain, he couldn't help but raised his hands to hold his head as his face grimaced.

Chang Yen saw that and asked if Feng Ming was alright.

FM: My head just hurts a bit. (he embarrassingly chuckled). Recently, if this area isn't aching, another area would be sore.

CY: Do we need to send for the physician?

FM: No need, no need!

Feng Ming was afraid that he had to drink bitter medicine and quickly stood up.

FM: I'll head back to rest a bit and then it'll be okay. If there's any new military news, just send the guards to notify me.

Feng Ming excused himself and rode back to the inner palace.

Reaching the palace gates, several female attendants were standing there waiting for him. Two of the attendants approached the horse. Feng Ming climbed off the horse; one foot was still on the stirrup when he suddenly felt lightheaded. His hands didn't seize the reins tightly when the sky spun about and Feng Ming fell into the deep snow.

CHAPTER 10

The servants came rushing towards Feng Ming. Feng Ming reassured them that everything is fine and that he just didn't hold onto the reins tightly and fell. He told them not to tell his Master about it so she won't have to worry much.

Feng Ming went to find Empress Dowager to discuss about what he heard.

FM: Master, doesn't it seem strange? All the captives all said the same thing, saying that they aren't Bei Qi's soldiers, but are ordinary civilians of Bei Qi. I don't think they are lying. Even though there might be a few who refuses to talk without fear of torture, but that does not mean all of them would not be afraid of death, right?

So what are Rong Tian's plans, you can tell me.

Empress Dowager un hurried looked over the paintings that Lu Dan had sent over and casually said.

ED: What's so strange about that? Bei Qi already had ill intentions to cause disruption towards Dong Fan, Right now, the chaos caused by the Priestesses have ended, the people in Dong Fan are in panic, there are also signs of political struggle, so it's just the right time for the King of Bei Qi to set an ambush. As for those prisoners, if they were to state their true identities then they'll be killed; therefore, they'll state that they are ordinary civilians of Bei Qi. In that way, those within the army unless they are on the battlefield, they won't kill ordinary civilians without combat capability for no reason.

Feng Ming saw that she was still mum about the whole situation; he felt a bit disappointed and returned to his room. He ate a whole dish of dumplings and frowned.

FM: I'm so upset, everyone is keeping a secret that he or she can't tell others. I don't have much brain cells like this. Fine, I won't bother with it, I'll just follow along. Anyway, even if I die here no one will be sad.

And Rong Tian even said that he is nearby.

Several days ago, not even his shadow was present, a message came that is not even clear, and yet he does not know that there's someone here worrying about him.

The more he thought about it, the more his eyes reddened.

One of the servants asked: "Is Duke Ming alright?"

FM: I just want to know where Rong Tian's corpse is, that's all.

The servant looked at him sympathetically and softly replied, "Several days ago, Duke Ming seemed happier and was focusing on the military affairs duties that the Great King had given you. I was also secretly happy that Duke Ming had forgotten about that person, but why all of a sudden you remember about him? The Advisor had reminded that we must not let Duke Ming feel sad, I'm very useless that I don't know how to persuade Duke Ming."

Feng Ming decided not to worry her and asked her for more dumplings. She left to grab some more.

After seeing her disappear, Feng Ming stood up and stretched his muscles. He gazed out of the window to admire the beautiful sunny day.

Right not it is winter already. Winter in Dong Fan compared to Xi Lei is much colder.

Rong Tian, has your plans already in motion? What is the hidden secret that you don't want me to know? I can't believe that after so many things that happened to us, there are still secrets between us.

Feng Ming looked up and discovered that the image in front of him darkened.

Has the sky suddenly turn dark so fast?

A loud sound of something heavy falling to the ground in the ground was heard. From a distant, the female attendant came back carrying the new hot dish of dumplings.

"The dumplings are here, Duke Ming cannot... Ah! Duke Ming! Someone, come quickly! Duke Ming fainted!"

This time, Feng Ming was unconscious for a longer period of time than before. His whole body shivered with chills, even with thick quilts covering him, he would still shiver in the state of unconsciousness. His sleeping face grimace and had a hint of pain.

Dong Fan King personally ordered for a physician to check up on Feng Ming. Chang Yen came by twice and ordered the servants to take good care of Feng Ming. Military affairs were abundant so every time he visited it was just for a few minutes and then left in a hurry.

In the beginning, Jun Qing lessen his amount of time visiting.

Jun Ting didn't appear, but that wasn't something strange.

Lu Dan seems to be extremely sick as well, he sent people over to check up on Feng Ming, but didn't personally come.

Empress Dowager was worried no less, she personally took care of Feng Ming and refused to depend on other people for help. However, Feng Ming's condition did not improve, and out of desperation, Empress Dowager requested to see the Great King and proposed to him that she need to leave the palace to find rare ailments to treat Feng Ming.

While unconscious, Feng Ming had nightmares, his body was burning up and the high temperature affected his dreams. He muttered bitterly in his dreams.

Rong Tian, where are you? Where is he?

Feng Ming vaguely found himself hesitating on the battlefield. Half of the flag was burnt with a smoky smell from the fire. The wind was cold like it was cutting through his bones. Everywhere was filled with limbs, blood flowing like the river.

He was bare-footed and stepped into a deep puddle of blood, just like an injured animal looking for Rong Tian.

Where? Where are you?

Feng Ming knelt down in the pool of blood and cried, within his pupils nothing was there other than the color of fresh blood.

Where are you right now?

He knew it was a nightmare, but he couldn't wake up. On the barren plains of corpses laying everywhere, within a blink of an eye, they are turned into dense bones. He knew this was a nightmare.

"Where are you, where?" He abruptly shouted, crying endlessly and his forehead full of sweat.

"I'm here, I'm right here." Rong Tian's voice looming in the distance.

Feng Ming ran towards the voice in the distance: "Rong Tian, where are you? Tell me, where are you?

"I'm here, I'm right here."

"Where?"

"Right here, next to you. Right next to you."

Feng Ming anxiously turned around in the open wilderness, searching all four directions. "I can't see, I can't see you! Come out, come out now!"

"I'm next to you, wake up! Open your eyes, Feng Ming!"

His shoulders suddenly ached as if someone was cracking it. Feng Ming moaned, bringing along the fearful reaction he had inside the dream and woke up, opened his eyes wide.

The candlelight flickered just like the corner of his eyes. He clearly saw a familiar face in front of him.

"Feng Ming, I'm here." There were the same black piercing eyes just like a tiger. One gentle kiss on his lips made him feel reassuring.

"Don't worry, I've come. Rong Tian is here."

CHAPTER 11

Feng Ming stared at him in awe and weakly asked.

FM: Am I going to die soon?

RT: Nonsense!

Rong Tian angrily said and then gentle soft voice, he helplessly sighed.

RT: Don't think about bad things. You've missed a lot and were unconscious for several days, now you're awake so there's nothing to worry about.

Feng Ming widened his eyes, staring at Rong Tian in disbelief.

FT: Let me touch you to see if this is real or not.

Feng Ming reached out to touched Rong Tian's face, carefully feeling it each little bit, after a long while he finally said.

FM: This is real. (He laughed softly while his eyes filled with tears.)

Suddenly he was fully awake, feeling shock and surprise, he asked.

FM: You've entered Dong Fan? Are you crazy?! (He suddenly sat up in bed).

Rong Tian grabbed his arm and embraced Feng Ming tightly so he couldn't move, affectionately placed his forehead on Feng Ming's nape.

RT: Don't worry, nothing will happen.

Returning Rong Tian's embrace, Feng Ming felt a bit relieve and asked.

FM: The palace is heavily guarded, the people monitoring me if not a dozen, then there's at least ten. How did you sneak in? Hurry and let go. Do you know what place this is and you're still bold, if someone came in and see us, what will we do?

It was hard for Rong Tian to see Feng Ming again so he continued to hold onto Feng Ming and refused to let go. He turned around to blow out the candle in the room and the two of them head towards the large bed.

RT: Did Lu Dan abuse you? If not then how come you're ill, I definitely will take my revenge.

His fingers found their way inside Feng Ming's clothes, carefully caressing for a moment.

RT: (frowned) Why are you so skinny like this, all your bones are exposed.

Feng Ming was both emotional and angry, but he didn't stop Rong Tian and allowed him to fumble all over his body.

FM: How did you enter Dong Fan's palace unnoticed? Empress Dowager hinted that you have a plan to defeat Dong Fan, but she won't tell me. So in the end, what is it that you can't let me know? These past days, where were you?

Rong Tian changed his position to embrace Feng Ming more comfortably. He sniffed Feng Ming's hair and praised him.

RT: Only your body fragrant smell this good. (he then slowly replied to Feng Ming) I came chasing after from Yong Yin's border, I found out that Tong Er had ill intention to steal the throne, so I led troops to fight with Tong Er for awhile with intentions of losing the battle,

pretending to be the defeated opponent losing his life on the battlefield; therefore, handing over Xi Lei to him.

FM: Are you crazy?

RT: Not knowing whether you're dead or alive, I couldn't stay in Xi Lei to waste time. Also, if news of my death reached Dong Fan, then Lu Dan will not be scruple and never will kill you after taking full advantage. That way, I would have enough time to save you.

FM: And I thought losing Xi Lei was just your scheme of deploying troops to mislead the enemy. How can there be a Great King like you, handing over your throne so easily.

RT: It's just temporarily.

Seeing Feng Ming's frown, Rong Tian tenderly kissed his eyebrows and smiled.

RT: After the battle, I took the opportunity to ran back to the capital before Tong Er, secretly escorted Empress Dowager away and in excitement lit the place on fire, pretending that Empress Dowager had self-immolated herself. Afterwards, brought 5000 suicidal soldiers whom I usually hid away to travel days and nights to reach Dong Fan.

FM: My God, you threw away Xi Lei, burned your own palace, and brought only 5000 soldiers to attack Dong Fan. Do you know how many troops there are here in Ping Xi? Each of their spit from them can drown you.

Suddenly two shadows silently standing next to the bed.

"Everyone here have been cleanly disposed of."

"Those surveying the area outside are also disposed of, a total of seven, don't know which ones are from Lu Dan or Jun Qing that are assigned here."

They were Rong Hu and Lie Er.

Feng Ming was both happy and scared, "It's really the two of you."

LE: Duke Ming, we've finally found you.

Rong Hu was delighted that he laughed, exposing his white teeth in the dark.

FM: You said that everyone here have been disposed of, does that mean...

"We have put sleeping drug inside the tea, the female attendants are all sleeping. The guards haven't slept for days, so I led several experts to kill them off without disturbing anyone."

"These two days, everyone inside Dong Fan are worried so the guards aren't on full alert, otherwise, it wouldn't be smooth and easy like this."

Feng Ming was worried about the kind female attendants and after hearing Rong Hu's reply, he felt a bit relieved. He turned around to ask Rong Tian.

FM: Then how are we going to sneak outside without anyone knowing?

Rong Tian faced Feng Ming and chuckled.

Lie Er and Rong Hu looked at each other, and at the same time lowered their heads.

Suddenly the room went quiet.

Feng Ming noticed something was strange and asked.

FM: Could it be that all of you entered this place, killed off all the guards, but never thought about how we escape?

LE: The plan was to enter the palace after 5 days that time the capital of Dong Fan would already collapse, the palace would be in chaos, and during the chaos we would easily save Duke Ming out of here. But because of the sudden news that Duke Ming was seriously ill in a coma...

Rong Hu secretly pinched Lie Er to tell him to shut up and then replied.

RH: The guards in Dong Fan strictly guard the exit so it's easy to come in but difficult to leave. Although we sneaked in, it's not a guarantee that we'll easily come out. The next morning, they will discover that something happened here.

RT: Even though it's risky, at least I was able to make you wake up.

Rong Tian stroke Feng Ming's tender face, filled with great emotion he said.

RT: From the day I received news that you were unconscious, I swear that 7 days, I'll endure 7 days. If within 7 days you still haven't wake up, I will personally come to wake you up, no matter the obstacles and danger. Don't you think I'm really stupid, not worthy of a king, you can go ahead and scold me.

Feng Ming's hands trembled and tightly grabbing onto Rong Tian's sleeves.

FM: How can you be unworthy of a king, you gave up Xi Lei, burned your palace, and snuck into the enemy's palace looking for death...

LE: Duke Ming, please don't be sad. Even though Xi Lei is temporarily stolen because of the Tong family, but the Great King had long prepared for the instability of internal affairs and had secretly ordered not a few close confidantes for ambush. Right now, other than the

regular generals/soldiers of the Tong family, all the other generals and ministers are still loyal to the Great King. It's just because of the helpless situation that they are forced to follow the enemy. As long as the elite assassins secretly ambush those that are head of the Tong family, then when the Great King return to Xi Lei, he can immediately retake the throne.

RH: (coughed two times) First off, let's not talk about this anymore, it's almost morning, I request Your Majesty to give the order.

Rong Tian was still embracing Feng Ming on the bed and now he finally decided to let Feng Ming go.

RT: The more bloody the battle, the more exciting it is, it's a man's honor. Let us try to charge our way out.

Feng Ming looked puzzled at Rong Tian.

RT: Let me personally help dress Duke Ming in his clothes. It's very cold outside, Duke Ming have to be careful.

The palace was quiet, as if there was no one present. The corpses were hidden somewhere out of sight, the smell of fresh blood was still floating in the air and was carried off by the wind.

More than ten silent shadows climbed onto the horses, all of their faces were covered to hide their appearances.

RT: Lie Er, jumped into my arms.

Lie Er climbed onto Rong Tian's horse and meekly leaned himself into the arm of Rong Tian.

RT: Let's go then.

Rong Tian issued the ordered for all the others to follow along.

Feng Ming was about to pull the reins but was stopped by Rong Hu.

RH: We're going this way.

Feng Ming saw that Rong Tian was heading a different direction, he was confused for a moment and then frightened.

FM: No! It can't be!

Rong Hu lowered his voice.

RH: This is the Great King's order, who would fail to comply?

Without wasting time, he lead Feng Ming's horse away and whipped it.

FM: No! I can't do this!

Feng Ming screamed out, trying to turn the horse around.

Rong Hu caught up and rode side by side. Took his hand out and severely slapped Feng Ming until he saw stars.

RH: I received orders from the Great King that no matter what method, I have to bring you outside of the palace without turning back.

Feng Ming felt as if a thunderbold had struck him, like his soul was drifting away from his body that he couldn't say a single word. His organs were like they were cut to pieces when Rong Tian left. A voice echoed in his mind that repeated over and over again: *Rong Tian wants to sacrifice himself. Rong Tian wants to sacrifice himself.*

FM: No, I don't want to listen to him! (Feng Ming muttered and shook his head).

RH: Without being distracted in caring for Duke Ming, the Great King might have a chance of survival. If Duke Ming continues to be like this, wouldn't it cause distraction for the Great King? Let us go on our way.

Feng Ming gripped tightly onto the reins, he saw that the images from both sides were flowing passed him, the distance between Rong Tian and him grew further apart.

Don't know why but the palace guards were extremely loose(not heavily guarded), nothing like several days ago. In a midst of confusion, riding almost less than half a mile, he heard a loud sound behind him. Knowing that it was Rong Tian and guards battling each other, his heart felt a cold piercing deep down, he couldn't help but turned around to look.

A thick black smoke appeared, filling the sky.

CHAPTER 12

Feng Ming noticed that they were heading towards the military meeting hall. In front of them, a guard who came from the military meeting hall came and saw them. Seeing that Feng Ming wore a black veil, he thought that he was the Advisor and asked him if he's going outside of the palace this early.

Rong Hu nodded and tried to lead Feng Ming's horse through the gate. Before they were about to leave, one of the guards felt something was off and told them to wait a moment. He walked towards Feng Ming and before he could finished his sentence of "You're not..." Rong Hu shouted out, withdrew his sword and charged through while fighting off the guards.

Rong Hu shouted to Feng Ming to head towards the South as there will be Xi Lei people waiting for him. Feng Ming was still stalling and again Rong Hu had to tell him to quickly leave or else all of them will die. Seeing two guards coming towards him, Feng Ming took out his unparallel sword and sliced them, he placed it back into his scabbard and rode off with tears in his eyes.

Feng Ming felt that Rong Tian, Lie Er, and Rong Hu all decided to exchange their life for his life so he can't disappoint them and continued riding away.

The southern gates of the palace was in front of him, but Feng Ming felt something was strange when there was no one around. Riding across the empty plain in front of his eyes would lead him outside of the palace, Rong Tian had already prepared people to meet him, but Feng Ming just stared out at the distance between him and gates and decided to turn back around to where he came from.

At that moment, behind the forest of trees near the wall, several hundred soldiers gave chase. Lu Dan was among them and shouted out: "Hurry and give chase! You must definitely capture him alive and bring him back to me!"

Rong Hu continued to kill off several palace guards, stole a horse and ran through the forest. When he was little, he was personally chosen by Duke Rong to train under strict conditions and secretly protect Rong Tian; therefore, his skills supress many. Seeing that his enemies are increasing in numbers, he wasn't scared at all, instead his strength increased, and continued chopping down his enemies.

His horse eventually was shot in the belly and legs, losing his balance, Rong Hu jumped down and before getting up, he made one quick swipe with his sword, causing two or three opponents to fall over. However, Rong Hu eventually got surrounded and was stabbed on the right side of his chest and then later his back. He broke free, jump around, kill some more, kick some more, roll around, swiping people, pull out his knife from his shoe, stabbed some more people and received some more injuries until his clothes were drenched in blood. He then shouted out to all of them: "I am Xi Lei Rong Hu, whoever wants to die then step forward!"

All of them were afraid to charge forward. That was when Rong Hu was grabbed by his collar and thrown onto the horse. The guards shouted out to chase after them.

Rong Hu finally got some time to breathe and looking at the person who saved him, he was a bit disappointed: "Why is it you?"

When Feng Ming was fighting a moment ago, he was injured lightly in two areas. One hand holding onto the reins and one hand holding the unparallel sword, facing Rong Hu, he smiled.

FM: If you want to lecture me, then please don't embarrass me. I understand what Rong Tian and you want, but the southern gates have an ambush, they are chasing after us.

Rong Hu looked behind them and it was obvious that guards were chasing after them: "Again, there's an ambush?"

There were two type of guards chasing after them, the ones wearing grey are palace guards, the ones wearing white are Lu Dan's men.

Before, Feng Ming's mental status was a bit chaotic, but now heading towards the point of no return, he was calm and told Rong Hu: "If we can't escape, I definitely have to die in the same place as Rong Tian." Looking at Rong Hu, the corner of his mouth curved into a beautiful smile.

Rong Hu looked back at the numerous guards, he knew escaping was no longer possible. The sad thing was that the elite troops of Xi Lei would die in vain and felt extremely sad, looking at Feng Ming, he silently nodded his head.

Feng Ming continued riding the horse and trying to look for Rong Tian. The military meeting hall was in flames and everywhere was filled with thick smoke. Feng Ming wanted to find Rong Tian so he shouted out: "Rong Tian, where are you?" Several Dong Fan's guards heard him and charged towards his direction, which Feng Ming knocked them down with his sword.

The two of them were surrounded, but Rong Hu and Feng Ming continued fighting with their backs against each other and protecting each other. Feng Ming's swordsmanship was taught by Rong Tian, though it can't be compared to Rong Hu, but fighting normal guards shouldn't be problem.

Both Rong Hu and Feng Ming were feeling tired and enduring several injuries. Feng Ming shouted out: "Rong Tian! Rong Tian, I've come back! Feng Ming came back!"

Suddenly there was a familiar voice that travelled forth: "Stop! Everyone stop! No one is allowed to harm Duke Ming!" It was Lu Dan who chased after them to this point.

"Advisor has ordered, no one is allowed to harm Duke Ming, only capture him alive!"

"Stop! Advisor had ordered everyone to stop!"

One of the guards covered in blood shouted out: "We only listen to Jun Ling Si, besides Jun Ling Si, we don't listen to anyone else! Brothers, let's kill these two enemies!"

"What audacity! You all dare to ignore my orders!" Lu Dan shouted out angrily: "Stop them for me!"

"Whoever go against the King's orders, kill them!"

Eventually the group of people fighting each other divided into three groups. Rong Hu and Feng Ming broke free of the guards surrounding them. They continued fighting, but because Feng Ming had just recovered from his illness, his energy was almost depleted. Soon Feng Ming was separated with Rong Hu and knowing that guards are attacking and a weapon charging forth, he closed his eyes and thought: Rong Tian, I'll be leaving first. At this time, I finally understood the meaning of life and death. His heart hurt like a knife piercing through, two drops of tears drip down his long eyelashes.

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At that moment, a swift sword forced it's way through and firmly blocked between Feng Ming and Dong Fan's guard. Just like dancing across the sky, the sword made half a round and several opponents let out painful screams as they fell to the ground.

Feng Ming felt that his waist was grabbed by someone, he opened his eyes wide in surprise to see to the face of Rong Tian covered in blood.

Rong Tian, one hand held onto his waist, he shook his head and let out sigh.

RT: At this time, scolding you won't do much anything.

Rong Tian lowered his head and gently gave Feng Ming a quick and deep kiss that he never done before. His other hand swiped through the air and another opponent's fresh blood splatter everywhere.

Seeing Rong Tian, Feng Ming felt emotional and at the same time regained half of his strength. He raised his sword and fought off an opponent next to him. Feng Ming couldn't help but glanced over at Rong Tian and chuckled sweetly.

FM: In my eyes, you have never been more heroic than today.

Knowing that life and death is in front of them, he understood that every minute and every second they had together were precious so he couldn't help but said everything that was on his mind.

Rong Tian was afraid that within the chaos he won't be able to see Feng Ming, he brought Feng Ming closer to his side and said: "Get to higher ground."

The two of charged towards the higher ground. The suicidal troops from all four directions knew that their Great King was within range and so they followed behind the two of them, soon there was more than ten of them, allowing the pressure to ease off of Rong Tian and Feng Ming.

Lu Dan focusing his attention towards Feng Ming told his guards to split up and protect Duke Ming, not allowing him to be injured.

Rong Tian and Feng Ming got to higher ground. They got some time to tie up their injuries, Rong Tian returned to battle. Rong Hu made his way to higher ground, even though he was heavily injured, he was still carrying someone on his back. Lie Er helped aid his brother. Rong Hu tossed the person who was unconscious off his back and told Feng Ming.

RH: I saw this person ordering the guards, this person's position must be of high ranking.

Rong Hu couldn't hold out any longer and sat down. He tore a bit of his clothes to bandage up his injuries.

Feng Ming looked closely at the unconscious person.

FM: It's Jun Ting. She is the only daughter of Jun Ling Si.

Lie Er laughed and said: "What a coincidence." He pulled the unconscious Jun Ting up and placed a sword next to her neck, shouted out to the chaos below: "Everyone, I order you to stop! If not, I will kill this person!"

Everyone was in a heated battle so how could they hear him, they continued with their fighting.

Lie Er was shouting loudly three to four times that his voice became hoarser. Rong Tian came forward, took a hold of Jun Ting and yelled out.

RT: This person here is someone who will become the next Jun Ling Si of Dong Fan! Jun Qing, do you not want this precious daughter of yours?

At this moment, those within the military division of Dong Fan finally recognized the person that Rong Tian was clearly pointed his sword at. Someone shouted out: "It's 13th Captain!"

"Everyone, stop! They have captured 13th Captain!"

The guards heard their superior's orders and stopped themselves. The men of Lu Dan were ordered to keep Feng Ming's safe and seeing that the other guards were no longer fighting, they also stopped. They all focused their attention towards Rong Tian and everyone became silent.

Rong Tian's people were in the center, the military forces of Dong Fan were in the middle, and Lu Dan's men were on the outside.

Feng Ming looked around but noticed that there was no image of Jun Qing or Chang Yen. Did Rong Tian accidentally killed them off?

5th Captain seemed to have lost an arm and the left side of his face was left with a cut mark from the battle. He made his way through the crowd and stood in an empty spot focusing his attention on Rong Tian: "All of you have no way out, if you release 13th Captain, we will allow you to have a complete corpse." It seems like he is the highest commander of Dong Fan there.

Lie Er: How funny. If you let us leave the palace, we will allow 13th Captain to have a complete corpse, if not, we'll rape first and kill afterward so all of our brothers can enjoy themselves before dying.

Lie Er always spoke without care, noticing that Jun Ting was a female, he couldn't let go of the opportunity to taunt them.

Everyone in the military force face changed color. The Jun family had held the highest military power in Dong Fan for generations, the heart of the military division. If Rong Tian were to defile Jun Ting in front of them, then even if they were to chop Rong Tian into many pieces it wouldn't be enough.

Feng Ming stood up, exhausted and asked them.

FM: Where is Jun Ling Si and General Chang Yen?

Rong Tian was abnormally silent.

Lie Er replaced them and loudly replied: "Dong Fan didn't follow orders from the Gods, those who are against Duke Ming as result met with disaster. Starting from three days ago, the plague spread throughout the military camp. Not only did the infected soldiers die immediately, but also made Dong Fan lose half of its military force. Also, those of noble backgrounds whom believed that the Gods protected them were not spared. I believe that almost more than half of their superiors have been infected and are laying in bed right now. The other half perhaps ran away to escape the plague, only the few present here are trying their best to defend the situation."

Feng Ming was surprised.

The military army faces grew gloom, apparently what Lie Er said was true.

No wonder the number of palace guards within the palace of Dong Fan plummeted and attacking the military meeting hall was so easy. It seems like the palace of Dong Fan had became a plague hell.

But he was in a coma for seven days, could that terrible virus severely killed off a large amount of military army within seven days?

Soldiers will not shed blood because “bean” will be victorious.

Feng Ming thought for a moment, his body was trembled fiercely as he looked over at Rong Tian.

Rong Tian understood what he meant, nodded his head, giving the response that Feng Ming had guessed correctly. He turned around facing the soldiers of Dong Fan and loudly asked: “Where is Advisor Lu Dan?”

“Lu Dan is here.” Lu Dan dismounted earlier from his horse, and stepped forward. Even though he had faced a bloody battle, his face did not express any fear. He came twenty feet in front of Rong Tian, examined the heroic Rong Tian and weakly sighed.

LD: Xi Lei King is definitely an impressive hero. Not only did you use the faking death scheme causing me to miscalculate, but you charged into the inner palace of Dong Fan to cause chaos and made the entire military army of Dong Fan completely fearful.

RT: (sneered) Advisor is just as impressive. Lured away Feng Ming from my grasp and this time forced me to enter the palace. Did I exposed any flaws? When did you know that I wasn’t dead?

Feng Ming was taken aback and stared back at Lu Dan.

LD: (smiled) There was no flaws at all. I really have to say that I admire both Duke Ming and Xi Lei King, I sent many people to monitor every movement of Duke Ming every day and did not seen any trace of involvement with Xi Lei King. Ah, if there was a flaw, why would I wait until today to set up this scheme? I was just relying on my intuition and my restless suspicion. It’s a pity that if I’ve correctly guessed this situation one day earlier, then things would not have come to this right now.

FM: No wonder I was baffled about why I was unconscious for seven days. Advisor had used the old scheme, if Rong Tian is not dead then he will would not sit idly and not save me.

Feeling ashame, if it wasn’t because of Feng Ming, with Rong Tian’s wit, he could never fallen into Lu Dan’s trap like today.

The beautiful lips revealed a trace of helpless smile, Lu Dan looked deeply into Feng Ming's eyes.

LD: Duke Ming, please don't blame me. How would Xi Lei King not know that this was a trap to begin with? But under this type of situation, there are people who clearly know it's a trap and yet still come.

Rong Tian shrugged his shoulders and coldly said.

RT: It is not a trap, you were very sick and so I had to come to save you. Do you want me to regret it for the rest of my life? That's right... (he looked over at Lu Dan) A moment ago, Advisor said that if you knew earlier one day then things would be different than now. Can Advisor explain this?

Before Lu Dan could open his mouth, Feng Ming already figured out the answer and replied for him.

FM: It's because that day before, the Great King (of Dong Fan) had wore the other pair of the unparallel sword on him. Since then, my life and the Great King are as one. If I die, then the Great King will also die. Advisor was suspecting that Rong Tian was not dead, created a scheme causing me to fall into a coma, tricked Rong Tian in coming inside the palace, setting up an ambush at the southern gates because the southern gate is the best place to set a trap, hoping to catch Rong Tian and me alive, using a net trap is the most guaranteed method.

Since these past days the sun had unusually shine, creating slightly warmer temperature, making the snow melt and exposed a small area of the ground. Because of this, Feng Ming was able to detect the net trap buried under the snow and ran off in the opposite direction.

If Feng Ming did not attract Lu Dan's troops, who had ordered to stop the military troops from killing Feng Ming, then Rong Tian would probably been killed already.

Could it be that the Gods had protected them?

LD: That's right, I had miscalculated one step and now placed the life of the Great King in jeopardy. Now, I can only try my best to protect Duke Ming's life, kill off Xi Lei King so Duke Ming can lose all hope and obediently follow my Great King.

5th Captain angrily said: "What nonsense is Advisor talking about? Ever since this person entered the palace, he had brought countless disasters to Dong Fan. I don't care who might die because of him, no matter what we cannot let him break into Dong Fan palace and destroy the Military meeting hall."

LD: (loudly said) Do you mean to say that you don't care about the Great King's life?

RT: Advisor's thinking is very simple minded. The military division has a significant presence in Dong Fan, within the royal family of Dong Fan, taking the interest of the country as priority. If the Great King is an obstacle to the benefit of Dong Fan, then even he can be sacrifice. If the Great King's life is related to national affairs, even if he survives this matter now, he won't be able to avoid dethronement in the future. If they want to dispose of the Great King, then his fate would either be by poison or hanging. Advisor should have heard many examples of it.

Even though Rong Tian was provoking him, Lu Dan couldn't help but have a major change in his face color. Lu Dan took advantage of the unparallel swords, believing that Rong Tian had died and forced Feng Ming to pledge allegiance to Dong Fan King. But he could never guess that that item would now have the reverse effect, forcing him to help Feng Ming.

Lu Dan knew what Rong Tian was true, that the military division could use the opportunity to dispose of Dong Fan King and select another heir within the royal family for the throne. Lu Dan hated his body, he could no longer protect his Great King any longer. Could it be that in the future, Dong Fan King would be at the mercy of the military division? Thinking about this, his heart ache like it was cut into pieces.

5th Captain knew that Lu Dan is known for plotting sinister act and also thinking for the Great King first and could do anything. Afraid that Lu Dan might turn against them, he waved his arm and shouted: "Someone, transfer my order, the palace planning for a mutiny, order all the soldiers that haven't been infected to come here quickly!"

Feng Ming was concerned and knew that these stubborn soldiers/generals would do anything to maintain order to Dong Fan, maybe even kill Jun Ting.

FM: 5th Captain, please wait a minute. Don't you want to know where the plague came from and how to treat it?

After he made that remark, everyone of Dong Fan was shocked. Even Lu Dan couldn't believe and stared at Feng Ming. Who would believe that such a large scale plague like a terrible curse by the Gods was actually man made?

5th Captain: So it was you who have created this ghostly trick?

RH: Such a terrible plague like this, how could someone have the ability to create it? Of course, the Gods are punishing you. As for Duke Ming, he is protected by the Gods, he's very knowledgeable, and naturally would know a bit about the nature of the plague.

Feng Ming couldn't believe that Rong Hu would lie at such a critical moment and yet he didn't blush and his heart didn't race, truly deserves to be Lie Er's brother.

Hearing what Rong Hu said, everyone calmed down a little bit. Indeed, they couldn't believe that a mere person like Feng Ming could have such great destructive power. If Feng Ming was that powerful, wouldn't he be on the same level as the Gods having the ability to give people disease?

FM: During the onset of the disease, what symptoms did the soldiers have?

Seven days ago, there was a terrible plague that spread causing confusion and panic throughout the military camps. Now that they heard it could be treated, it gave them some hope and 5th Captain's attitude became cooperative.

5th Captain: In the beginning, there were only two or three people that were infected. Then later a group of people fell ill, and soon everywhere were sick soldiers, whoever came in contact with the sick soldiers also contracted the disease. They got a fever, headache, back pain, and were moaning to no end. Soon their whole body was covered with terrible pox, many people died after being infected in one day.

Remembering the piles of festering corpses in the barracks, 5th Captain couldn't hide the irrepressible horror on his face.

It's smallpox... Feng Ming finally understands why Rong Tian decided to hide this from him because he would definitely object to this scheme.

Once an outbreak of smallpox spread, it will take away many innocent lives.

No wonder Rong Tian said that soldiers will not shed blood. If Lu Dan didn't sprout suspicion about the ambush, then perhaps Rong Tian would have successfully conquer this kingdom without having to use any soldiers.

Feng Ming knew that in the past history, there have been troops that infect soldiers with disease and eventually defeated a city without having to go into battle.

FM: Did this plague happen from the time the prisoners of Bei Qi were caught?

5th Captain: That's right. That terrible Kingdom Bei Qi, don't know where they caught this terrible disease, bringing trouble to Dong Fan. Ever since General Xie Guang captured those Bei Qi's prisoners and split them to each barrack for interrogation, the plague began to spread, and every day a large number of soldiers became sick.

However, 5th Captain did not know the real story behind that. Kingdom Bei Qi did have aggressive ambition towards Dong Fan and intended to ambush Ping Xi. Xie Guang coincidentally raid Bei Qi's ambush twice. The first time, the enemy was notified causing Xie Guang to fail and return back, that was indeed the real Bei Qi's troops. The second time, Xie Guang found the location of the ambush and captured the Bei Qi's soldiers as

prisoners. However, this was a secret arrangement Rong Tian made in disguising a group of people as Bei Qi's soldiers.

Rong Tian's plan was very difficult to achieve, which was to bring the smallpox of Xi Lei to Dong Fan. A time when technology was not present, in order to do this, having a living host was the best option. Of course, he wouldn't sacrifice his best men; therefore, he found some Bei Qi people and infect them with the live smallpox virus, disguise them up as Bei Qi's soldiers and deliberately let them get caught by Dong Fan's soldiers and bring them into the military division to spread the infection.

FM: The mortality rate...within one hundred people, how many people died?

"About fifty."

Feng Ming became pale, that was 50% mortality. Smallpox had been eliminated in modern society so he never imagined that this devastating disease would appear in front of him.

In general, mortality rate of contracting smallpox virus should be around 30%, but Dong Fan is a kingdom very far away from Xi Lei and never encountered the smallpox virus.

Therefore, the resistance to this new virus for Dong Fan compared to Xi Lei is weaker and so the mortality rate would be higher.

Moreover, the smallpox virus seems to spread rapidly and quickly took a lot more lives. From his knowledge, Feng Ming understood that it has an incubation period and the death cycle is about two weeks. However, the situation with Dong Fan, within 7 days they already had a large number of deaths among the soldiers.

5th Captain: Does Duke Ming really know how to treat this plague?

FM: Everyone, please sit down. I will tell you what I know.

RH: If you want to hear Duke Ming speak, you have to first lay down your weapons.

Lie Er was the first to place his dagger back into his waist and sat down beside Feng Ming. Rong Tian and his soldiers also lay down their weapons.

The other soldiers felt that they were more in number so they weren't afraid to continue fighting if needed. They also lay down their weapons and sat down. Even if they were to fight again, they should at least recover some strength.

Lu Dan also did not want to fight again so he waved his hand for his men to sit down as well.

Seeing how they were all like obedient students sitting down in a large lecture hall, Feng Ming didn't want laugh out loud at this unexpected development as if won't help.

Rong Tian walked next to Feng Ming and hesitated to sit. He was a young ruthless ruler, who had made earth shattering achievements, causing countless lives to be wiped out under his command. This time, without letting Feng Ming know, he used the smallpox scheme so he couldn't bear to face Feng Ming and didn't know whether to sit down or not.

Feng Ming knew what was on his mind so he pulled onto the hem of his armor and whispered: "Come and sit down next to me."

Hearing Feng Ming's words, Rong Tian was surprised, his eyes lit up and sat next to Feng Ming, his big hand held onto Feng Ming's waist and softly said: "Does your back hurt? Lean against me to feel more comfortable."

Over two thirds of the total number of the audience saw their enemies like that, they felt strange.

During the fierce battle, the wise and heroic Xi Lei King well known among the eleven kingdoms was actually trying to please his lover so it was a shock to them. Lie Er and Rong Hu were both used to their behaviors so they didn't blush or anything, just felt that it was a natural thing.

Feng Ming leaned against Rong Tian and began explaining.

FM: A plague is currently happening in Ping Xi right now. If I'm not mistaken, this disease should be smallpox.

When Rong Tian said that soldiers will not shed blood because "bean" will be victorious, Feng Ming never expected that "bean" would be pox as in smallpox. But Morse code only gave pronunciation and so Feng Ming couldn't have guessed.

"Smallpox? No wonder those who are sick have smallpox all over their body."

Feng Ming starts explaining about smallpox to them and Lu Dan asked him if he knows how to treat it. Lie Er told them that Feng Ming knows how to treat it. Then out of nowhere, Jun Ting wakes up, but is still tied up behind Feng Ming, tells her soldiers not to listen to their words.

15th Captain asked Feng Ming if he can prove himself to make them believe his words. Feng Ming told them they could bring a sick soldier to him and he won't be afraid of getting infected. Rong Tian and the others also tell them that they too are immune to the smallpox virus.

Some time ago when Feng Ming discovered the terrible smallpox virus, his first reaction was to create a vaccine to prevent smallpox. It was a very efficient method of stopping the epidemic spread within the palace of Xi Lei and the army. Not only does Feng Ming, Rong

Tian and Empress Dowager have the immunity to it, but the 5000 soldiers Rong Tian brought along also have the immunity to it.

5th Captain wanted to bring the sick soldiers from the camp into the palace, but Lu Dan refused to because he worried the disease might spread within the palace.

Rong Tian was smiling inside, just as long as they could leave the palace, their chance for survival will be higher since there are the other 4000 soldiers outside that haven't appeared yet.

Lu Dan of course did not suspect this, however he only thought that nothing is more important than Dong Fan King's life and priority is to keep Feng Ming safe. This coincides with Rong Tian's intention.

JT: No, If I don't see it with my own eyes, I wouldn't believe a single word of this person. (she stared coldly at Feng Ming) This person entered Dong Fan, deceived the Great King's trust in participating in the military affairs, if we don't kill him then Dong Fan will not regain its dignity. Unless he could truly save our soldiers, otherwise, don't even dream of leaving here alive!

Feng Ming was shouting inside about being wrongly accused. It wasn't him who killed Lin Yin so why does she have to lay all her hatred on him? However looking back, Lin Yin's death is something he had some part in. If Empress Dowager didn't state that there was an ambush by Bei Qi from the south, then Lin Yin wouldn't risk exposing his identity to immediately notify the ambush party to leave quickly.

CHAPTER 13

Lu Dan couldn't understand the underline hatred in Jun Ting's eyes, he knew about Lin Yin and thought Jun Ting just couldn't hold back her emotions.

LD: The concerns 13th Captain have are reasonable. How about this, we'll ask Xi Lei King go to the location where the sick patients are and the rest of the people stay here. If what Duke Ming said is true, then Xi Lei King is not afraid of the smallpox.

Feng Ming stood up and laughed.

FM: Advisor sure is calculative. I'll say it clear to you, if Rong Tian is not within my sight, I will immediately kill myself. Whether it Dong Fan King, or thousands of Dong Fan soldiers, they will all die along with me. (His wrist turned and the unparallel sword was placed near his neck).

Rong Tian leisurely stood up and stretched out his back. The rest of Xi Lei people also stood up with him. The guards and soldiers of Dong Fan were suddenly on high alert and stood up, staring intently at their enemies.

Just one wrong word and blood will flow like a river.

FM: What does Advisor think?

LD: Lu Dan of course believes Duke Ming.

Feng Ming nodded his head and looked towards the military army.

FM: 5th Captain, how about you represent Dong Fan's army and give your opinion?

The 5th Captain was about to say his reply when Jun Ting laughed and interrupted him.

JT: Other than my father, no one can represent Dong Fan's army.

FM: But how come we don't see Jun Ling Si?

After he asked, everyone's face in the army went gloom. Jun Ting's face went pale, grunted and then turned her gaze away from Feng Ming.

LD: Jun Ling Si was also infected.

Feng Ming was silent. If that's true then Chang Yen also did not escape the same fate. This general in Dong Fan treated Feng Ming very kindly so Feng Ming couldn't help feeling a bit sad.

JT: If it wasn't General Xie Guang's recklessness of bringing the prisoners of Bei Qi into the army camp and distributing them among the barracks, then Dong Fan's army wouldn't be in this mess.

Lie Er was secretly delighted and winked at Rong Hu. They had captured a large number of Bei Qi soldiers who had lost with the sole purpose of spreading disease, can't believe that Xie Guang distributed the prisoners everywhere spreading the disease and unknowingly put in a helping hand for Xi Lei.

Not only that but when interrogating those prisoners, there were a lot of soldiers present so for the soldiers to fall ill is something unavoidable. Therefore, the situation is hard to prevent, this plague has caused a huge impact on Dong Fan's army.

Feng Ming can't blame Rong Tian. Indeed, with the situation where they are outnumbered, the best solution would be this in order to have an upper hand. The most interesting thing about this is that even if Dong Fan's army has a large number of casualties, they have no

evidence that this was Feng Ming's fault. The people of Dong Fan will not hold a grudge against him.

LD: In the end, does Duke Ming have any plans?

FM: Of course to prove that I'm not lying. I request that Advisor and 5th Captain open a path and allow us to leave the palace and enter the barracks holding the sick patients, after that we can sit down again and talk about it.

JT: (objected) I've already said, unless you can prove to me in front of my eyes that you can cure the disease for Dong Fan, if not then don't even dream of leaving the palace alive!

Lie Er: Then let your people bring the sick patients here and we'll prove it to all of you!

LD: No! The Great King is in the palace, how can you risk bringing the sick patients inside the palace?

5th Captain: Can Xi Lei King and several of your men come with us to the barracks and see the sick patients?

JT: Not even one person can leave the palace! (pointing at Rong Tian and the rest of the gang) These people are the best of Xi Lei, with superior skills, heroic and not afraid of death. Inside the palace and yet they can fight a stalemate, if we let them outside, I'm afraid that we cannot protect ourselves. If we let them escape, it would be a great disaster to Dong Fan in the future.

RT: I will not be separated with my men. If I go then they all will need to go along.

Lie Er: You all better come to an agreement, bringing the sick patients here is good, taking us to the barracks is also good. Either way, Duke Ming is sincerely trying to prove that he is able to help treat this disease.

RH: If you want to fight, we are also not afraid.

JT: Jun Zhao (facing the crowd) Send out my order, immediately bring several sick soldiers here.

Jun Zhao is a guard of the Jun Family so he would naturally listen to Jun Ting. Just when he was about to leave, two confidants of Lu Dan placed a sword towards his neck.

JT: Lu Dan, you don't care about the thousands of soldiers' life, do you?

LD: Then does 13th Captain not care whether the Great King lives or dies?

JT: Nonsense! The Great King is just one person within the royal family chosen to rule the kingdom. As long as one person from the royal family survives, then there's no worry who is

the successor to the throne of Dong Fan. Soldiers are dying in large number, if there are no soldiers to protect the royal family how will Dong Fan resist enemies' invasion?

One confidant of Lu Dan replied for Lu Dan: "13th Captain, what you said is not correct. Advisor never said that he won't help the soldiers of Dong Fan. He just wants to allow the people of Xi Lei to visit the barracks to prove to us. He doesn't want the plague to spread inside the palace. 13th Captain is the daughter of Jun Ling Si and during such a critical moment, just because of your lover's death and resentment of Duke Ming, your obstruction to Duke Ming going outside is unwise."

Jun Ting was angry and turned over at 5th Captain. She tells him that she can't believe he would want to allow the enemy who had burned down the military meeting hall to leave the palace. 5th Captain just stated that he was thinking about the soldiers and just wanted to see if Duke Ming's words were true. If they are then the Gods had mercy on Dong Fan. Jun Ting tells him that when her father fell ill, he had ordered her to take the commander post as Jun Ling Si and if he doesn't listen to her then it'll be considered as a betrayal.

Lu Dan never saw Jun Ting as an important person; he smiled coldly and ordered his men: "Whoever dares to make a wrong move, kill them!"

The atmosphere became serious again and Lu Dan's men were fighting the army. In the midst of fighting, one person who worked for the Jun Family came and asked to see Jun Ting. Jun Ting was still help captive by Rong Tian and them. That person tells Jun Ting that Jun Ling Si, her father had just passed away. After hearing that, she screams out. All the soldiers kneeled down in despair and Lu Dan was shaken by the news. Basically, Jun Qing was the main support/commander/leader of the Dong Fan army and his death made a huge impact on everyone including Feng Ming.

Jun Qing had died, the fate of the other generals of Dong Fan is unknown whether they are dead or alive, and many soldiers had already died. It could be said that the strength of Dong Fan's military force had been destroyed nearly half. Even if they were to disposed of Xi Lei's men, they would not be able to defend themselves against Bei Qi if they took the opportunity to attack again.

In the beginning, the plan was to lure Feng Ming to Dong Fan, who would have imagine that the result would be like this?

Could it be that the Advisor is the one who caused Dong Fan's downfall?

He was strong, but he couldn't tolerate the pain in his heart, aching like it has been stabbed by a knife.

His gaze like a sharp blade went through the crowd and landed on Feng Ming's handsome face.

LD: Duke Ming...let us talk for a bit.

Feng Ming looked over at Rong Tian. Rong Tian thought for a bit and then nodded his head.

RT: Alright. Advisor, please.

The three of them went to a corner where there were less people.

RT: The situation right now, Advisor can clearly see. Dong Fan is in chaos, a kingdom who had lost its defense force will be useless in protecting your Great King, even if you were to capture Feng Ming alive or kill me.

LD: There has to be a way. If there's no way then why would Xi Lei King be willing to talk to me to negotiate?

RT: Advisor sure is an intelligent person, with lots of schemes and plans, how can Rong Tian, I not admire your efforts?

LD: You're flattering me, Xi Lei King. Although Lu Dan is full of scheming, I have brought monstrous disaster to Dong Fan. It is clear that everything is already arranged by the Gods, Duke Ming is indeed someone with profound elegance and fortune. My condition is very simple, Dong Fan's military division will comply to Xi Lei's protection, my Great King will still enjoy all the rights as he had in the past, and anyone Dong Fan people who dares to not comply with the orders of the my Great King, Xi Lei King will think of a way to get rid of them.

FM: What is Advisor trying to say? Can you explain it in a way that it's easier?

RT: What Advisor meant is that Dong Fan will soon become Xi Lei's vassal territory.

FM: What?

Aren't they being trapped inside the palace and almost getting hacked to death by others? Why would Lu Dan choose to pledge allegiance to them at this time?

Could it be that the death of Jun Qing made him irrational?

RT: What other options does he have? The main goal of Advisor is to protect Dong Fan King. Other than he himself, only we have the true power of protecting Dong Fan King. If Advisor doesn't rely on us to protect Dong Fan King then would he allow Jun Ting, who will soon take control of the military army? Jun Ting hates you (FM) so much that I'm afraid when the situation is stable; she would immediately dispose of the person who is wearing the same unparallel sword as you – Dong Fan King. The military army already viewed

Advisor as an enemy, even if in the future, the army is not led by Jun Ting, I'm afraid that because of the relationship between the Advisor, the other Generals might pledge loyalty to the Great King.

LD: It's strange, but the person I trust the most is Duke Ming. In this world, other than the Great King, there is no one else that I worry about. Duke Ming has to take good care of my Great King.

Feng Ming thought to himself: You're only trusting in the unparalleled sword. Because of me, Rong Tian will not take your Great King's life.

FM: Advisor will not regret this? To take the fate of a kingdom to exchange for one person's safety? Even for thousands of years, Advisor will bear the traitorous infamy.

RT: You're not thinking as deeply as Advisor. The military force of Dong Fan is already in a bad state. If they don't have Xi Lei's military strength to aid them then Bei Qi can attack any time and if Dong Fan were to be in the hands of Bei Qi Kingdom then the fate of Dong Fan King would be even worse. Taking the current situation of Dong Fan, its downfall is inevitable, but Advisor is just trying to reduce the number of casualties.

FM: So this is cry of the many kingdoms under disputes? Clearly they have the ability, but yet one person cannot turn the tide.

LD: Duke Ming finally understands what Lu Dan had said to you. Dong Fan had fallen into the rapids, the enemies fighting to come on board, the one thing I can do is to choose a trusted helmsman to hand the ship over to him, hoping that the large ship will not be destroyed; the person on the ship can be spared. As for who will take ownership of the ship in the future, I don't have the ability to decide. There's not much time to waste, the military force is still not resolved. I request Xi Lei to give me an answer.

RT: I promise after Dong Fan is under allegiance, I will stop the plague from spreading, treat Dong Fan people kindly, give Dong Fan King an easy life and protect him. However, his monarchy power revoked, if not then how would it be called an allegiance?

LD: (shook his head) No. The Great King had always been the most important person in Dong Fan. To make him become an ordinary rich person is a disgrace to him. The other royalties I don't care, but as long as the Great King is alive he has to be in the highest position, absolute power in hand, without any traces of grievances.

Feng Ming opened his mouth wide, he can't believe that Lu Dan had done so many things and yet even with little time to live he still does not want Dong Fan King to suffer any grievances.

RT: Fortune can be negotiable, but the King power needs to be revoked. Other than me, no one can guarantee the safety of Dong Fan King after Advisor pass away. Advisor has to think about this clearly.

LD: No, I can't let the Great King suffer. If Xi Lei King won't agree, you all would have a hard time escaping here, let alone one person.

FM: Advisor shouldn't forget that we still hold the secrets of the smallpox. Even if Advisor were to send out orders to kill us, the military army might not comply.

RT: As for Jun Ting, she is still young. At this point in time, she might not have the ability to command the whole army.

LD: Does Duke Ming believe so? Right now, the military army is in distress, if they know that the one behind the spread of the plague is Xi Lei, do Duke Ming still think that because of the many soldiers who died including Jun Ling Si that they won't be angered by it?

RT: You don't have proof.

LD: Just like how Lu Dan guessed that Xi Lei is not dead. As long as there's a bit of doubt, they will be discerning about the overall situation. What does Xi Lei King decide now?

RT: Does Advisor not care about Dong Fan King?

LD: If I can't guarantee that he won't be looked down upon, then it's best to let him die along with me.

Feng Ming felt a bit saddened and clenched tightly onto Rong Tian's hands.

RT: Fine, I'll promise you. As long as Dong Fan King is still alive then he will enjoy the all the privileges that he should have. But after he died, none of the royalties can inherit the royal throne, Dong Fan will then officially become a part of Xi Lei.

Lu Dan looked over at Rong Tian, after exploring for a moment, he smiled with please.

LD: Xi Lei King will not dismiss your promise in front of Duke Ming.

Lu Dan reached out his thin palm. After three handshakes, the promise was decided.

FM: Advisor, please wait. Before, you said that my health was poor and required Advisor's lifespan to save me....

LD: The Great King had already worn the unparallel sword; does Duke Ming still doubt Lu Dan's sincerity? After the seven days of being unconscious, doesn't Duke Ming seem like your strength had greatly improved? The bloody battle awhile ago, if Duke Ming was like before, you would have fallen already.

Feng Ming was surprised and his eyes followed his shadow, he tried to understand Lu Dan's hidden meaning.

Rong Tian stood next to Feng Ming and cheerfully said.

RT: This person is very talented; Dong Fan King is truly blessed to have met someone like him.

FM: Let us not laugh too soon. Lu Dan isn't just one person to decide for Dong Fan. Can he persuade the military army?

RT: Why should he persuade the military army? Your clueless face is too cute. With Lu Dan's ability, confronting with the military army who had just lost Jun Qing is not something difficult.

Lu Dan met with 5th Captain and tried talking to him.

LD: Right now, for the survival of Dong Fan, the plague continues on and the only person who knows how to treat it is Duke Ming. Jun Ling Si is no longer here, and 13th Captain treat Duke Ming with hostility. For the fate of Dong Fan, 5th Captain has to take in account of the many thousands of soldiers' lives as priority or do you choose to hold the interest of the Jun Family as priority?

5th Captain was silent for a moment, he looked over at Jun Ting who was still crying while being tied up and in the hands of Xi Lei.

5th Captain: You want to prevent 13th Captain from inheriting the role as Jun Ling Si?

The role as Jun Ling Si had always been inherited by the Jun family, this tradition has been passed down for hundreds of years.

LD: That's right. The fate of many people now rest on the decision of 5th Captain. Whether it is a savior of Dong Fan or a lackey of the Jun Family, then we'll see which one you choose?

5th Captain's complex eyes looked over at Jun Ting who had just heard of her father's death. The loyalty of the soldiers towards the Jun Family had been imprinted deep in everyone, but seeing how many elite soldiers of his had fallen one by one, how can a captain not feel any pain?

5th Captain: What do you want me to do?

LD: Take Jun Ting away, temporarily lock her up. Ask for the secret of smallpox from Duke Ming and then release Jun Ting. As for the position of Jun Ling Si, Jun Ting isn't the best candidate for it. 5th Captain had commanded soldiers for many years, has all the

qualifications and is deeply profound, your replacement of Jun Qing, wouldn't it complete his wish?

5th Captain: I will temporarily lock up Jun Ting, but the position of Jun Ling Si is something that can be easily decided. Within Dong Fan there are still a few Captains who are resting their health, maybe within a few days they will be able to recover. The position of Jun Ling Si can be later decided.

LD: That is also better.

RT: So it is war or peace, have you made your decision?

Jun Ting was crying in pain and when hearing that, she looked up suddenly and clenched her teeth.

JT: It's war!

That day, Lin Yin resented Feng Ming and Empress Dowager for exposing the location of Bei Qi's ambush and had told her that Feng Ming was an ominous curse. When he first appeared, he already destroyed the holy pond, and in the future he will definitely cause Dong Fan to meet with great disaster. Right now, she had lost Lin Yin and now her father, thousands of soldiers had died, she still keeps this hatred for Feng Ming.

5th Captain: Hold on! Right now, fighting is useless. The important thing at this time is to stop the spread of the smallpox. I request Duke Ming to release 13th Captain to show a bit of sincerity.

Feng Ming knew that Lu Dan had put in much effort so he understood and follow through.

FM: We have no ill intentions towards 13th Captain, Rong Tian just wanted to save me and therefore, snuck into the palace of Dong Fan. If 5th Captain is also earnest, we will not only release 13th Captain but also send our ten elite soldiers to follow along with you to the barracks where the infected soldiers are to prove that we know how to prevent others from contracting it.

LD: Let's do that, let Duke Ming release 13th Captain first and let his people prove to us. As for Duke Ming and Xi Lei King, you can temporarily stay at Duke Ming's quarters to wait for the result.

"Alright."

Lie Er pulled out a dagger and cut the rope behind Jun Ting. When Jun Tian got her hands free, she immediately reached out towards Lie Er and tried to grab his dagger.

Even though Lie Er looked feminine, he was still one of the two guards beside Rong Tian, so how can Jun Ting even have a chance to harm him. Seeing that she couldn't harm Lie Er, she directed herself within five steps away from Feng Ming.

"Duke Ming watch out!"

"13th Captain...."

Jun Ting's attack was interrupted and she was kicked down by Rong Hu.

"13th Captain!"

"13th Captain, please don't be impulsive!"

Several soldiers rushed to help her up.

Feng Ming was taken aback by Jun Ting's madman like behavior, he quickly stood next to Rong Tian. Lie Er patted Rong Hu's shoulders: "You even dare to hit a female, wait until I tell Chiu Lan about this."

RH: You dare to drive a wedge between me and Chiu Lan, I'll find Yong Yi to get pay back.

Lie Er went mum and went back to stand next to Feng Ming.

JT: No need to worry about me, I want these people who insult Dong Fan to repay with their lives.

Rong Tian thought to himself that Jun Ting must have some suspicion towards them about the smallpox incident just like Lu Dan. If that's the case then Jun Ting need to be rid of before it gets out of hand. He looked over at Lu Dan in the crowd. Lu Dan understood his worry and nodded in reply.

FM: What is it?

RT: Nothing, I was just sighing how Xi Lei is big and yet could not find a talented person like Lu Dan.

There have been two or three people who received order from 5th Captain and block Jun Ting from causing trouble.

5th Captain: I request 13th Captain to resolution as priority. 13th Captain has been overly emotional filled with grief; your mental status is unstable, with the situation here, it is better to allow us to deal with it.

Jun Ting saw that she was surrounded by her own troops, her mind on high alert and stared at 5th Captain.

JT: You dare to be unreasonable with me?

5th Captain: I don't dare. It's 13th Captain who is too emotional, I request 13th Captain to take a break first.

JT: You want to betray the Jun Family? (she looked around at the troops) Don't you all see this traitor taking action? My father's ashes haven't calm down and yet have the Jun Family's dignity disappeared?

After shouting out with exhaustive hoarseness, tears filled her eyes.

In a moment of silence, all the military troops who were loyal to the Jun Family turned themselves to 5th Captain.

5th Captain: If you all think that what 13th Captain is doing is right, if you think that preventing the spread of smallpox and saving our fellow soldiers is not top priority, then pull out your swords and kill me.

CHAPTER 14

Lu Dan's voice travelled forth at this time.

LD: The smallpox is still spreading; we should not further delay the time. Let's place 13th Captain under temporary confinement until she calm down. Duke Ming and Xi Lei King can temporary stay at the inner quarters. In replace of the Great King, I issued this order, 5th Captain will be in charge of the rest of the army. As for who will take the role of Jun Ling Si, we will soon have a meeting to elect a qualified general for the position.

Rong Tian holds the secret of the smallpox and had made a promised with Lu Dan, to have 10 of his soldiers be followed by the Dong Fan guards to the barracks in order to prove their immunity.

5th Captain ordered his lieutenant to have half the men monitor Duke Ming and Xi Lei King, bring them to the quarters and surround the palace. While the other half of the men escort the 10 Xi Lei men.

There were three different circles formed. Rong Tian and Feng Ming were in the middle. They were encircled by their men. The second outer circle was the military men, and the outer circle was Lu Dan's men.

When they reached the quarter, Rong Tian winked at his men. Rong Hu held the door, Lie Er brought a dozen men inside to check the inside: "It's empty inside, there is no ambush."

They went inside with most of their men staying outside and guard the surrounding.

Inside the quarter, Feng Ming felt relieved and sat himself on a chair.

FM: I can't believe the situation had turn around like this.

Feng Ming reached for a cup of cold tea on the table, but Lie Er immediately snatched it from and fiddled with it before handing it back: "There's no poison, you can drink it."

Rong Tian pinched Feng Ming's nose, blaming him for not being more alert.

FM: How should I know there will be something in it?

RH: I have inspected twice, according to what the spies said this palace has two small tunnels, no signs of being used, but to be safe...I have ordered someone to close the entrance, and also left two people in there to guard.

FM: So it's still morning, it's definitely a morning filled with danger.

Feng Ming suddenly remembered something and pointed at Rong Tian fiercely.

FM: Next time if you dare to joke around about sacrificing yourself, I will not forgive you! This time, if it wasn't because I ran back, then you would have become a King sliced up into pieces.

Rong Tian knew that he was going to be scold, but he never thought that Feng Ming would remembered to scold him at this time, so he silently sat down.

Lie Er knew what to do and ordered everyone to leave. Along with Rong Hu, Lie Er went outside and stood guard in front.

LE: Everyone keep watch here. I will bring some men to check that there's no flaw in our defense.

In the main room, Feng Ming was battling with the many emotions he had that all wanted to vent out.

FM: Why did you enter the palace when you knew there was a possibility of a trap?

FM: Why did you did take the risk knowing that you might not be able to survive?

FM: Why did you use smallpox to harm people?

FM: Why did you push me away and wanted to be a hero in raiding the Military meeting hall?

RT:

Rong Tian reached out his arms and pulled Feng Ming into an embrace.

RT: Do you clearly not know the reasons?

FM: You idiot. You are the Great King, why do you act irrationally?

RT: I am the Great King, therefore I can act irrationally.

FM: You...Aren't you Rong Tian, the great strategist with wide visions?

RT: If you are next to me, I will always be the great strategist and visionary Rong Tian. If I don't see you in front of me, then I am just your Rong Tian.

As long as there is one string of hope in saving you, even if my sacrifice is idiotic, I will still do it without hesitating.

Feng Ming's heart was like it was filled with warm water, lamented loudly, Feng Ming leaned forward within Rong Tian's arms, for a long time without saying a word.

FM: Empress Dowager...does she know that you entered the palace to commit suicide?

RT: She just knows that if Duke Ming dies, then 80% her son doesn't want to live. Since death is inevitable, it's better to risk everything and fight. A mother always forgives this stubborn child of hers.

FM: Your mother has always been peacefully and happily living the palace for years, why did you pushed her into danger by disguising her to enter the palace? What would happen if she was discovered?

RT: You said it like I wanted her to be in danger. It was her that thought of the smallpox scheme, wanting to lower Dong Fan's military strength, weaken them enough that the results are positive. Then it will truly be no soldiers shed blood and yet we've gain the upper hand in conquering another kingdom. She was persistent in disguising herself to enter the palace, saying that only she is the most capable person to cause havoc within Dong Fan's military force and concentrating their soldiers within the city gates. As her child, what is he to do when his mother is stubborn? And just as she said, we synchronized with her on the outside and turn Dong Fan's military force in a frenzy.

Feng Ming was stunned.

The lady who gave birth to Rong Tian is clearly not a simple person.

RT: Don't frown. With me next to you, the crisis will be resolved. Just like today, it was clearly a bad situation, but now it changed to this. It seems that when we return to Xi Lei, we definitely have to show our gratitude to the Gods. Have a ceremony to thank the Gods for nine days and nine nights, what do you think?

FM: That's strange. It seems like you aren't worried about the situation in Xi Lei. Have you forgotten that you've lost the throne?

RT: Your faith in me is not the same as Lu Dan. When Lu Dan saw that I was still alive, he knew Tong Er won't stand a chance. If he doesn't believe that I could take back the throne, then why would he make a promise with me?

FM: Not right. You must be hiding something from me.

RT: If I don't let Tong Er demonstrate a bit of his skill, then how will those officials that aren't loyal to me expose themselves? If I want to conquer the world, then I have to stabilize the internal affairs. I'll take this opportunity to wipe out all the hidden dangers next to me.

FM: I know that your full of schemes, but are you sure you can take back the throne?

RT: It seems that your faith in me is very far from my enemy who has faith in me. Do you think you need to be punished?

Feng Ming saw that Rong Tian's eyes darken, his whole body covered with a burst of heat, rapid heartbeat, with a bit of panic, Feng Ming said.

FM: Dong Fan's knife is at our necks and yet you still want to do these things?

RT: What's there to be afraid of? I believe in Lu Dan's sincerity.

FM: Let's just wait until Lu Dan deal with the military generals first.

RT: Right now, everyone is in a panic, the military division in chaos. As long the remaining generals are taken care of. Having control of the rest of the soldiers is nothing hard.

FM: The military strength is deeply rooted, even if the ship is rotting, the nails are still attached. Even if Lu Dan has the ability to assassinate those high ranking generals, or if all of them are laying sick in bed, this won't be an easy task.

RT: (revealed a strange smile). It seems that Duke Ming has forgotten about my mother who is leading a troop of 4000 elite men, the best of Xi Lei among thousands, hidden outside of the palace.

FM: If at this time, she doesn't see us leaving the palace, then would she think that we have been killed and would be sadden to the point of dying?

RT: With my understanding of my mother, before being sadden to the point of dying, she would use everything in her power to get revenge for us.

FM: Get revenge?

RT: First thing is assassinate all the high ranking generals.

FM: (stood straight up) That's not good. Empress Dowager can't enter the military barracks to take revenge just because she lost her child. What if something happened to her?

RT: My mother won't be like that. She would surely kill some people, then tell her troop to head back to Xi Lei, for the glory of her son, she will use the hidden troops to kill Tong Er and take back the throne. That is the mother of Xi Lei King Rong Tian, the most honorable woman of Xi Lei.

FM: I feel light headed. All the people next to me are ambitious maniacs.

Rong Tian saw that Feng Ming was too cute and couldn't help but kissed him mercilessly on the lips.

The curtains lifted and Lie Er's voice and footsteps quickly entered. He happened to see Feng Ming bursting out of Rong Tian's embrace and sitting back up in his seat.

LE: Your Majesty and Duke Ming, please forgive me. I didn't know that I've disturbed you two, it's just there's something that needed to be reported. Dong Fan's military force outside has no movement.

Feng Ming decided to find a topic.

FM: Where's your Prince Yong Yi? Why would he allow you to come looking for death?

LE: Because of I anger Yong Yin King and along with the second and third Prince's instigation, Yong Yi is no longer a Crown Prince, but since he is of royal background, he is not short of money. He doesn't know that I am here in the palace, if I let him know wouldn't he tear up the whole sky? The Crown Prince' title...it's fallen into the hands of the second Prince.

Feng Ming couldn't believe Lie Er's ability was that great, and so he was a little stunned.

RT: The second prince of Yong Yin has a good relationship with Tong Er. When Tong Er was crowned King, he was the first person to receive a gift.

LE: In the future when Xi Lei plans to attack Yong Yin, just like Tong kingdom which has been our enemy country for many years, it would be easier to decide. In the past, Yong Yin has been allies with Xi Lei and a neighboring kingdom so it was hard to attack them without motive. Yong Yin is next to Xi Lei so if we don't conquer it, it would be hard for Xi Lei to expand. Haha... Tong Er has helped our Great King solve this big problem – that Crown Prince sent gifts to the rebel Tong Er so when our Great King return to take back the throne, sending troops to attack Yong Yin would only be natural.

Feng Ming now understood that Rong Tian's throne has a lot of hidden benefits.

Rong Tian has another thing on his mind. He just kissed Feng Ming, but was interrupted by Lie Er so he is trying to find a way to re-seize Feng Ming's affection and cough once to alert Lie Er to leave.

Lie Er understood and said: "If Your Majesty has nothing else to order, I will continue my inspections then."

Lie Er quickly ran off, saw Rong Hu guarding outside the door and loudly said.

LE: Brother, you have guessed wrong. They were still fully clothed, therefore, nothing happened. Give back the money I bet.

Feng Ming could hear everything that Lie Er said and was embarrassed to the point of wanting to hide himself under the table, but Rong Tian pulled him back.

RT: Our actions compared to what our subordinate's guesses are too slow, is this a shame? No, we have to quickly speed up our actions.

Feng Ming turned around and looked at him, seeing that his wounds which had been bandaged start to stain blood, he didn't have the heart to punch him and softly said.

FM: Your whole body is hurt, you should rest a bit. (took the initiative to give RT two kisses) The weather is cold, you can just hold me.

Rong Tian didn't want to make things difficult for Feng Ming so he didn't want to go against Feng Ming's words and tightly held onto Feng Ming.

These past few days, Feng Ming had been secretly mad at Rong Tian, blamed him for letting him fall into the hands of Lu Dan, and pretending to fake his death, causing him to worry. Right now looking back, in a short time Rong Tian and Tong Er were battling and without saying anything, went back to Xi Lei to save Empress Dowager, and travelled days and nights to reach Dong Fan, bringing smallpox over. Sent someone to investigate Bei Qi's military plans, disguised people as Bei Qi's ambush party, and took into account of the situation with Yong Yin kingdom. Just when their plans were about to succeed, Lu Dan's scheme made Rong Tian appear, forcing him to enter the palace when the time isn't right, and fought a bloody war. Even a robot cannot be able to handle this, definitely had made it difficult on this Great King of Xi Lei.

Rong Tian's familiar breathing was near the tip of his nose, Feng Ming quietly gazed at the familiar image he had seen so many times in his dreams. Just like living in a beautiful dream, he giggled to himself.

RT: What are you giggling about? Your eyes are like they are dozing off, do you want to sleep?

Feng Ming shook his head, looking at Rong Tian affectionately, and softly said.

FM: How am I willing to close my eyes?

The two of felt like the winter snow had been melted away by the sun and didn't feel cold at all. They continued to embrace each other tighter, hoping that they will no longer be apart, being together like this was good.

The time quickly flown by and the sun is now in the west. Rong Hu quickly came in and said.

RH: The soldiers outside have suddenly withdrawn, Advisor Lu Dan has arrived.

Rong Tian was silent for a moment.

RT: He sure is quick, within a short amount of time he was able to deal with the military division.

Lu Dan came in quickly, his face flush unusually. Upon seeing Feng Ming, he said.

LD: The smallpox infection suddenly spread much stronger, all of the soldiers are now infected. The scariest part is that several thousand elite soldiers of Bei Qi took advantage of the chaos and snuck into the residence of the generals and assassinated many generals. Right now, the whole place is a mess. The Great King had ordered for me to take charge of Dong Fan's military force, the situation is a bit resolved as long as Duke Ming can make a public appeal.

Rong Tian was on high alert, the story of all the soldiers in the army being infected is false. About one half of them were taken care of by his mother, the Queen. While the other half, Lu Dan held an emergency meeting, captured all of them and kill them, expecting that none of them would be able to live.

FM: Where is 13th Captain and General Chang Yen?

LD: Two days ago, General Chang Yen had fallen sick and died. 13th Captain had long been infected and had just passed away.

Hearing that, Feng Ming knew that Jun Ting had been murdered. Although if she were to take charge of the army, she would probably not forgive him, but remembering the times that they participated in military affairs, he couldn't help but feel sad.

FM: Advisor wants me to make a public appeal?

LD: That's right, as long as Duke Ming make an appearance, you can capture the hearts of Dong Fan's people.

The sun had set, during these past days, the capital of Dong Fan had been shrouded with death, of course there was a sudden strangeness.

Fireworks were lit at the city wall, multicolored lights illuminated the sky, the commoners gathered at the city wall.

The plague had brought numerous deaths to Dong Fan but it finally was contained.

"The Messenger of God has come!"

"The plague can be dealt with now!"

The plague had frightened many people and most of them couldn't believe that there was good news. Filled with suspicion along with nervous anticipation and excitement, many of them did not dare to step foot outside of their house for several days, but now have gathered at the city wall.

Hundreds of lanterns shining, their Great King was present, Lu Dan, a few low ranking soldiers who had been promoted, and two other people they didn't know but have heard a great deal of – Xi Lei King Rong Tian and Duke Ming Feng Ming.

Feng Ming unveiled a secret that will have a significant impact on this world – a method of dealing with smallpox.

FM: Smallpox is a vicious virus, the virus can easily spread and for those kingdoms that rarely encounter it, the consequences are more serious. In Xi Lei, this disease has also occurred, many innocent lives were taken, Xi Lei King Rong Tian had prayed to the Gods to have mercy and finally touched the Gods, they had given him the method of preventing smallpox. Today, under the instructions of the Gods, we had come to Dong Fan and because of Dong Fan, help rid of the dreaded smallpox.

Rong Tian stood next to Feng Ming and watched him, he brilliantly smiled

FM: The method is very simple, the cattle herders who raised cattle usually are infected with cowpox, this is from the cow being transferred to humans. This type of cowpox is similar smallpox virus but is less harmful to human and is not fatal. As long as a person is infected with cowpox, they will be immune to the smallpox virus. If one were to be in contact with smallpox again, he will not be infected.

Feng Ming looked around at all the confused expression on the people's faces. The words immunity and virus are two new terms that they cannot comprehend.

FM: The patients who are infected with cowpox, take the pus of the pox out, create a small cut on everyone's arms, squeeze the pus into the cut, bandaged the area. Within a few

days, your arms will have several poxes, in the future, you will no longer be afraid of smallpox.

They were all in commotion. They have witnessed the terrible smallpox and were terrified by it. Now they have to squeeze this kind of thing on their arm, wouldn't that mean death?

LD: Those who do not believe, you can come to barracks located outside to see for yourself. Duke Ming had brought several people from Xi Lei who had used this method, none of them are afraid of smallpox, they are currently taking care of the patients there.

"Let's go! We have to see it with our own eyes!"

"Choose a few people to go see if Duke Ming is lying or not!"

Several young, strong, and courageous people were elected to go to the barracks to see the situation.

Feng Ming asked Rong Tian.

FM: If they know the method of prevention, preventing this terrible disease, would they rebel?

RT: Preventing a plague is already a good thing; at least they don't have to worry about the health of their family members. When they know that the vaccine for smallpox is effective, they will worship you like a God.

Those young people returned back from the barracks. One young man frantically shouted: "They are really not afraid of the plague, they are helping the sick patients, wiping their bodies, feeding them. I looked carefully at the far edge of the camp. They seriously are not afraid of being infected! Gods, you have finally appeared! I can finally bring back my family who had left to escape this plague!"

"Oh mighty Gods!"

"You finally have mercy on us!"

"We can finally go out to the streets, the kids can come home!"

Thousands of Dong Fan people kneeled down crying and share their gratitude to the merciful Gods.

Ever since the plague had appeared, Lu Dan had been closely guarding Dong Fan King.

DKF: To all the people of Dong Fan, this is the order of the Gods, sending Xi Lei King and Duke Ming to save us, which we deeply appreciate. From today onward, Dong Fan is a vassal kingdom of Xi Lei. Duke Ming had received the love of the Gods, the Gods gave us

guidance, with his help, this land will be more prosperous, all of us can live a better life no longer suffering from hunger and misery!

Dong Fan King always listened to Lu Dan so this speech Lu Dan requested him to read it.

"This is the guidance of the Gods."

"Duke Ming is loved by the Gods"

"Because the priestesses attempted to harm Duke Ming, they were punished by the Gods, causing us to lose the beautiful holy pond."

"Is Dong Fan really going to become a part of Xi Lei..."

Lu Dan had already arranged hundreds of his people to hide within the commoners and shouted out: "We listen to the Great King! All hail Xi Lei! All hail Duke Ming! The Gods will bless us!"

"The Gods will bless us!"

"Following Duke Ming, we will receive love from the Gods!"

"All hail Duke Ming! All hail Xi Lei!"

Because of that, the crowd was persuaded and continued to shout along.

FM: So Dong Fan belongs to who exactly? It belongs to you right?

RT: Of course it's yours. Dong Fan is yours and you are mine.

Dong Fan is too far from Xi Lei, using force to conquer it is very difficult, but using the Gods to conquer it is the best method.

Out of the eleven kingdoms, who compared to Duke Ming is more suitable to be the spokesperson for the Gods?

Even Rong Tian also believed that his lover was from heaven, otherwise how could he be so perfect?

Rong Tian and Lu Dan exchanged glances, stood out to let the people below see his appearance. Using a heroic tone he spoke to the audience in a loud voice.

RT: I am Xi Lei King Rong Tian, from today onward, Dong Fan will become Xi Lei's vassal territory. I promise to treat all of Dong Fan people the same as Xi Lei people. I will give you equality, with a stable and prosperous life. If anyone dare to attack Dong Fan, they will become an enemy of mine. I also promise, Dong Fan King's position in Dong Fan will still be as honorable as in the past, in this land no one will be of higher position than Dong Fan

King. Even I and Duke Ming are powerless against Dong Fan King. But after Dong Fan King, those who of royal background in Dong Fan cannot inherit the throne, the position as Dong Fan King will disappear, at that time, Dong Fan will officially become a part of Xi Lei.

FM: Xi Lei King brings you equality, a life of stability and prosperity, the people of Dong Fan, are you all willing to follow?

Below the city wall, the atmosphere was like an erupting volcano with many people shouting aloud: "We're willing! We're willing!"

Lu Dan had received the promise of Rong Tian in front of many people, he expressed a sense of satisfaction. Turning his head away, with gentle eyes, they rested on Dong Fan King without leaving.

LD: I have caused Your Majesty to lose Dong Fan, do you hate me?

Dong Fan King saw the people down above and then looked at Lu Dan.

DFK: Why does Advisor say that? If not for Advisor, I won't have everything. Even if there was no Xi Lei King Rong Tian, how long will Dong Fan be able to last in my hands? This kingdom and these people, in my eyes, cannot compare to one smile of yours. Advisor, can you smile once more for me?

Lu Dan's heart was heavy, he revealed a very brilliant smile like the spring. He held onto Dong Fan King's hand and noticed that his lover's hand was ice cold, trembling incessantly.

The capital had never had a calm night like that before.

Empress Dowager heard the news and rushed to the city wall, from afar she could see her son and Feng Ming appearing majestically on the city wall. She guessed that about 90% of the situation and was both emotional as well as angry. Her anger had made her lose her dignity as a Queen when her eyes flowed with tears ordering the assassination of all the generals in Dong Fan.

The situation is now set, she doesn't want to have a hard time facing Lu Dan. She secretly ordered someone to tell Rong Hu that she is below the city wall.

Rong Tian facing the people below, without a second delay, took out the cowpox pus for the Dong Fan people.

FM: Where did you get the cowpox paste from?

LE: When coming from Xi Lei, his Majesty already have thought that this trick would be useful in dealing with Dong Fan so how can he not prepared the vaccine for it? When we caught the Bei Qi soldiers, one half of them we infected with smallpox and the other half

with cowpox. By now those that are infected with cowpox are being tied up and hidden at a secret place so taking the pus from their arms is easy.

Feng Ming was never accustomed to such brutal way so he shook his head and frown.

RT: (coldly said) Lie Er, Feng Ming was talking to me, how can you hear every word clearly?

LE: Lie Er don't dare to. (he took two steps back)

After midnight, they exhausted back to the palace, Rong Hu had been informed of the whereabouts of Empress Dowager and the other elite soldiers. The assassination of the generals was successful, but suffered heavy casualties, almost 800 people died. Those were the suicidal soldiers that Rong Tian had used much effort to train them. The death of one caused grief to the rest.

Empress Dowager had dressed as a low ranking soldier hiding in the military division, Rong Hu brought over three thousand troops along with palace guards. Rong Tian will become the person in charge of Dong Fan in the future so no one was opposed to his troops being present.

However, though this place is not the inner palace of Xi Lei, they still needed to be careful.

Feng Ming was tired to the point that his whole body ache and was planning to take a bath with Rong Tian and then rest a bit. Lu Dan had sent someone over to inform that in half an hour, Dong Fan King will come over and submit a formal submission document.

Feng Ming was puzzled and said: "Couldn't this wait until tomorrow?"

Rong Tian seemed to understand and nodded in agreement.

After bathing they changed into their official outfit and sat in the main room waiting for dong fan King and Lu Dan. Lu Dan was aware that when he used someone he cannot be suspicious of them. But with Rong Tian, he needed to be on high alert. In front of the entrance, he told the guards to stay outside and together with Dong Fan King entered inside.

Feng Ming had never seen a formal political occasion before and was nervous.

FM: Inside a small quarter like this, wouldn't it be less formal? Not according to formal procedures? Not according to the rules?

RT: Lu Dan just wanted to prevent Dong Fan King from feeling uncomfortable and therefore chose a small quarter like this to get things done quickly. The military forces had been resolved; Lu Dan wants to quickly seal the promise. Dong Fan King had publicly announced

our allegiance so this is just a formal procedure, signing our names on the piece paper and that's it.

At this time, Feng Ming nodded his head.

RH: Informing Your Majesty, Dong Fan King had arrived.

The curtains lifted and Dong Fan King appeared wearing his grand outfit for a Great King. His head wore a royal beaded pendant crown to symbolize the Great King of Dong Fan. His hand carrying a golden document and stepped into the main room, he suddenly stopped and turned his head around slowly.

Lu Dan sighed.

LD: I will be waiting for Your Majesty outside. From today onward, Your Majesty will have many things to take care of on your own.

Letting his lover face Rong Tian and Feng Ming on his own, Lu Dan ruthlessly sat in a chair down the hall to enjoy the scenery outside.

Feng Ming saw the empty looked in Dong Fan King's eyes and couldn't bear but stood up and asked him to sit down.

The three of them sat down and Feng Ming sincerely said.

FM: Rong Tian has made a promise with Advisor, even if Dong Fan is in allegiance, your position as the Great King is unchanged. You're still the most honorable man in Dong Fan. Your Majesty can rest assure that we will treat you and the royal family with kindness.

Dong Fan King was moved by Feng Ming's gratitude; he glanced over Feng Ming and whispered.

DFK: Thank you Duke Ming. Advisor definitely had chosen the right person.

Rong Tian noticed that on his waist, Dong Fan King was wearing the unparallel sword.

It was because of the unparallel sword that caused Lu Dan, who loved Dong Fan King like his life, to easily allow Rong Tian to reach his goal.

There was silence within the atmosphere in the main room and finally the golden document was laid out on the table.

Feng Ming held his breath. No matter how simple this ceremony was, this moment will be recorded in history marking the beginning of a kingdom gaining power and another kingdom being annihilated.

Under the imprint of Dong Fan King's name in the document, Rong Tian signed his flamboyant name that is destined to shine brightly in the history books.

Lie Er lifted up the submission document and read it aloud.

LE: The reason why Dong Fan is able to survive and prosper is because of the will of the Gods. Duke Ming had saved the people of Dong Fan from the plague, which is also the will of the Gods. Dong Fan does not dare to defy the Gods' will and therefore pledge allegiance with Xi Lei. From today thereafter, Dong Fan will become part of Xi Lei, the people of Dong Fan will become the people of Xi Lei. After I die, Xi Lei King will become king of Dong Fan. I would like to put in this oath, with no regrets for generations.

Lu Dan was sitting behind the curtains and quietly listened to every word Lie Er had read. At the end of it, he heard someone inside sighed a sign of relief.

FM: It's finally official.

Hearing Feng Ming's words, Lu Dan revealed a hint of a smile. He rested his head on the backrest of the chair and slowly closed his eyes.

The last drop of his tears fell from the corner of his eye, silently fell onto his hand, the one that had handed Dong Fan over to Rong Tian.

The wind outside were blowing forcefully, the curtains couldn't help but fluttered.

Within the ice cold darkness, white snowflakes fell from the sky, dancing lightly, like two children turning about, like the kiss of the gods gently watching this beautiful land.

Not many people in history could find a hidden gem like this, from the title as a traitor, can they truly understand the profound wisdom and his profound love he had carried deep inside?

But because of him, this land will be taken care of by Xi Lei. During turbulent times, within the eleven kingdoms it did not have to go to war because of him. The history of this kingdom, the name Xi Lei Duke Ming will not be easily forgotten, allowing this land to be more stable and prosper than the other kingdoms who will pledge allegiance to Xi Lei in the future.

However, the people of this land will not know that their days of happiness and without difficulty were derived from the short lived life of a brilliant person.

Knowing of Lu Dan's death, Feng Ming was deeply sadden as his nestled within Rong Tian's embrace that snowy night opening his eyes wide for the longest time without sleeping.

He remembered what Lu Dan had said, after he had recovered his strength, Lu Dan's life will only last for seven days. Tonight was the seventh day. Tonight was also the seventh day Feng Ming had woken up from his coma.

Rong Tian accompanied him throughout the night.

When it was morning, Rong Hu informed: "Dong Fan King ordered people to send this over."

Feng Ming opened up the silk rectangle box, it was the unparallel sword that Dong Fan King had wore the night before. The familiar scabbard, everyone was surprised.

RH: Dong Fan King said, throughout his life everything that Advisor had done was of great benefit to him, except for this, even one useful task it didn't even have, and so he returns it to Xi Lei King.

At this time, Lie Er ran rushing in from outside and was breathing heavily.

LE: We have gone to Dong Fan King's palace to find him, but he's not there. The coffin where they temporary placed Lu Dan's body is empty inside, everyone is now searching for them.

Feng Ming didn't say anything and rushed outside.

Rong Tian ran after him, but was unable to stop him.

RT: Feng Ming, where are you going?

Rong Hu and Lie Er also desperately tried to catch up.

The snow last night has not stopped, there were more inches of snow. Feng Ming continued running like crazy without paying attention to those chasing after him. Until reaching the front entrance of the Heaven and Earth palace did his pace suddenly stopped. Bending over and panting until he finally straightened up again. His eyes were already filled with tears.

Within the middle of the white covered snow, his eyes rested upon the stairs in front of the Heaven and Earth palace, one could vaguely see two figures nestling together sitting there, covered with a thick layer of snow.

That face that had been covered up by the snow was embracing the dead Lu Dan, ending his life at the place where they first met each other...

In his life, this was the only thing that he had done that defied Lu Dan.

Lu Dan had taken care of him days and nights, before his death, Lu Dan had spent thousands of effort and in one moment all his work were in vain.

A Great King who ruled a nation and yet he cannot control his sadness, a shock had struck Feng Ming.

Lin Yin is gone, Chang Yen is gone, Jun Qing is gone, Jun Ting is gone, Lu Dan is gone and Dong Fan King is gone...

Numerous people have died.

Life and death are like that, always changing. Personal power and power of love are as short and thin like that.

Feng Ming could not control himself, facing the sky above, he cried out bitterly.

His waist was slowly grabbed and laid upon a solid chest, Rong Tian finally reached him.

FM: Rong Tian. Don't leave me, in life or death, I can't stand it.

RT: We won't be like that, in life or death, we won't be separated.

FM: We won't. This morning, if Dong Fan King didn't have the sincerity to return the unparallel sword, perhaps I might be dead now.

RT: Silly Feng Ming. Even if he wore the unparallel sword, you will still be alive.

FM: Could it be that the curse is false?

RT: The unparallel swords are one of the three mysterious treasures of Xi Lei, the curse is definitely not fake. It's just when I went back to pick up my mother from the palace, I wouldn't leave the three treasures behind for Tong Er to casually give them away?

FM: The fake unparallel swords can trick Lu Dan?

RT: The scabbard of the sword is real; however the sword blade is replaced. How strange, that year when you wore the unparallel sword, the blade was blunt compared to this one. That night when you used it to fight the enemies, weren't you aware that the blade was very sharp?

FM: So the day earlier, you left the fake unparallel sword in the palace? You didn't hesitate to leave the real scabbard, knowing that it can help you in this case, but how do you know that Tong Er will give it away to Lu Dan?

Rong Tian severely bit on his ears.

RT: My dear Duke Ming, when will you wholeheartedly admit my great ability as Xi Lei King? I have told you many times before; all of Xi Lei is filled with my loyal confidant. Finding someone next to Tong Er and suggesting him to send a gift to someone is not something hard to do.

Feng Ming hugged him tightly.

FM: I don't care, I want to wear the real unparallel swords with you. From today onward, if you're alive I will be alive, if you die, I will die. No matter life or death, we will never be apart....

AFTERWORD

Two months later, the results of the vaccine were revealed, the smallpox epidemic was gradually brought under control; there was no further spread of it to the other cities. Rong Tian was successful in using the Gods' power to win the hearts of the people and increased the number of confidants in the palace. In order to alleviate the death of Dong Fan King, Rong Tian had elected a young boy in the royal family to take over the throne temporarily, but the true person holding the power is Rong Tian.

The 5000 soldiers that were brought over had a loss of around 1000 soldiers. Rong Tian had placed the remaining soldiers around the area in order to rein in control of the new territory. After the destruction of the holy pond and prevention of smallpox, two people were now famous in history. Also at that moment when Dong Fan King himself made a royal oath in front of everyone it is enough to prove that within a short time, no chaos will happen under Feng Ming rule, which behind that is Xi Lei.

The most urgent thing now is to return to Xi Lei and recover the throne that Rong Tian had lost. As for the ending to Tong Er, even Rong Tian does not bother to worry about. But with neighboring Bei Qi Kingdom eyeing Dong Fan, it was due to Rong Tian's swift thinking of crowning the Great King Xi Lei to eliminate the ambition of Bei Qi from afar so that they don't dare to infringe on the territory of Rong Tian.

The next morning, the spring blossom emerged from the quiet soil. Rong Tian ordered Rong Hu to send more than ten people to escort Empress Dowager and Feng Ming from Dong Fan, and so they left quietly heading back to Xi Lei.

Xi Lei, we're back.

